VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

SEPTEMBER 1987 ONE DOLLAR

SPECIAL HUNTING ISSUE

VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

History books may give us heroes, but they don't give us much flesh and blood. Maybe that's because we're reluctant to tarnish images, to reveal a puzzling blend of strengths and weaknesses in the men and women we admire.

But, it's a devilish way to celebrate achievement, because it deprives us of hope. With only the bones of biographical facts accompanying superhuman accomplishments, we despair of ever reaching such heights again. We wonder if today we still harbor that spark of greatness within ourselves.

This year, particularly, it's easy to reminisce and sigh, while we toast the 50th year of the passage of the most successful, progressive, and gutsiest piece of legislation ever passed for wildlife in this country.

In 1937, at a time when the country was still reeling from an economic crash, Senator Key Pittman from Nevada and Congressman A. Willis Robertson from Virginia co-sponsored the Pittman-Robertson bill for Wildlife Restoration, a radical, unprecedented law, that paved the way for a stable, secure program of wildlife conservation across the nation, by diverting an excise tax on sporting guns and ammunition to a fund for wildlife restoration.

But, it's frustrating to read the legislation without knowing the men behind it. I'm convinced that you've got to dig deeper to find the flesh and blood behind the law. You've got to work to find the goods on them, to find that essence of good and bad that made these men heroes.

That's why I went back to the letters. A. Willis Robertson was chairman of the Virginia Game Commission from 1926-1932, and I've been living in this office with those old yellowed files of copied letters and reports for about six months now. I can't bear to put them back on their shelves to wait out another 60 years in obscurity. I don't understand the magic of the process, but the words are still powerful stronge. I had hoped that they'd give me some answers about one man, one hero. And, they did.

In the 1920s, Robertson worked in an atmosphere of ignorance, of politics, and tight-fisted businessmen. When he came aboard with the Game Commission, the department was not but a few years old, still new and wobbly. But, Robertson didn't grumble, didn't complain, didn't hide his weak agency under a rock. Instead, he came out with both pistols smoking. Rather than backing off from frustrating situations, he looked for ways to circumvent problems. And, I've come to believe from these records that his courage rested on his ability to admit when his best just wasn't enough, and then to *do* something about it. Like when a fish hatchery experiment failed dismally, Robertson simply started a campaign to hire the best hatchery professional in the nation. And he got him.

I started to realize after carefully smoothing out the onion skin papers, after reading hundreds of those letters to and from sportsmen, politicians, and fellow wildlife administrators, that Robertson just kept at things, gnawing at them until something happened.

It's curious that he didn't give up when buried in disillusionment and despair. He didn't back down from defeat. And I'm thinking that sort of action didn't result from any exceptional endurance and lots of failure but from a peculiar mind set. These men we call heroes believed that defeat preceded success. Defeat just brought you that much closer to success, provided you were on the right track to begin with. It may take years when you suddenly realize that men like Willis Robertson achieved greatness only seldom, perhaps maybe once in a lifetime, but that all of them faced defeat daily.

I have a great aunt in Virginia Beach who regularly dons a starched suit and white gloves and travels to a local cemetery, carrying a picnic basket and a pitcher of martinis. There she sits conversing with her friends recovered by soft grass, bringing them up to date on the latest happenings in the neighborhood and around the world. I've lately thought that I'd like to make the short trip up to the Stonewall Jackson cemetery in Lexington to visit a man who would be 100 years old this year if he were still living. I'd like to fill him in on how the agency of his has matured and found success and wisdom in its efforts to bring back the turkey and deer to this state, because of those words he scratched out 50 years ago that gave us the opportunity to learn and understand and get things done. I'd like to chat with him about the environmental problems we're facing today, and ask him how you screw up enough courage to face the truth. And how you learn to have faith in your actions and in your mistakes.

But Robertson was a practical man. He'd probably wonder why I wasn't working that day, or at least out hunting in the hills of Virginia, working my dog and learning something. So I'd probably pack up and head out, bent on making some mistakes to find a few answers.

Virgil Shepherd

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Grayson Chesser makes decoys that work for the duck hunter, and are collectibles as well. Read more about this Eastern Shore artist, beginning on page 12; photo by Curtis Badger.

4 The Rappahannock River: by Larry Evans
A path of wild water in Northern Virginia.

9 Floating the Rappahannock and Rapidan Rivers
A map and guide for the canoeist.

12 Grayson Chesser: A Man of a Classic Time
by Curtis Badger
Grayson Chesser carves decoys in the tradition of Nathan Cobb, Miles Hancock, and Dave Watson. He is a rig maker first, a decoy maker second.

18 "Insert these 29 words"
Very truly yours, A. Willis Robertson
by Virginia Shepherd
A. Willis Robertson co-sponsored the Pittman-Robertson bill for wildlife and safeguarded it with 29 words in 1937. But, few remember that Robertson earned the right to sign his name to that bill during his years with the Virginia Game Department.

26 Healing Scarred Land by Bob Gooch
On Goshen Wildlife Management Area, some land healing is taking place on an old silica mine site, with the help of a progressive new reclamation fund.

28 Bowhunting Beyond Bucks by Bruce Ingram
Bowhunting is not limited to the deer season. Archers can hone their skills on small game as well.

32 1987 Virginia Hunter's Guide
A special supplement for the Virginia hunter.

Note: The 1987 Virginia Hunter's Guide is available in reprint form free from the Game Department, Education Division, P O Box 11104, Richmond, VA 23230-1104.

Cover

Grey squirrel; photo by Vinyard Bros.

by Larry Evans
photos by Bill Portlock

The Rappahannock River:

A path of wild water in Northern Virginia

To canoe the Rappahannock River is to move down a narrow corridor of wildness.

The river's main tributary, the Rapidan, provides paddlers with the same sense of being far removed from the megalopolis that is transforming the Northern Piedmont of Virginia.

Just beyond the high, wooded ridges and smattering of farms that border the Rappahannock and Rapidan are the counties of Fauquier, Culpeper, Orange, Spotsylvania and Stafford. They have been among the fastest-growing in the state during the 1970s and 1980s, and are expected to continue their spiraling pattern of growth as the suburbs of Washington, D.C. move inexorably outward.

And so there is some question as to how long the two rivers will continue to run free and relatively wild.

There are people, now as in the past, who have looked at the rivers with an eye toward turning them into one or more flat reservoirs to provide drinking water, electricity, or to be used to regulate salinity for the benefit of oysters far downstream. Little has been said recently in that regard, but sooner or later such proponents of change will be heard from again.

Others look at the Rappahannock and Rapidan and see a rare kind of beauty they think needs to be saved and savored. A recent rise in membership of local environmental groups and the increasing popularity of canoeing the two rivers are indications that there are more people than ever who want to keep the rivers as they are.

But for now, the two sides are quiet.

There are no rhetorical exchanges of the sort that occurred in the early 1970s when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers considered transforming both rivers into a 23,000-acre reservoir by putting a 196-foot-high dam on the Rappahannock upstream of Fredericksburg. And, unlike in the early 1980s, there has been little talk lately about whether Northern Virginia localities intend to reach down with a long pipe and siphon away clean drinking water—a threat that seems to have been put to death by a

long-term water supply plan that has Washington-area localities relying on the upper Potomac River.

With such debates stilled, the sounds now associated with the Rappahannock and Rapidan are the scrape of new aluminum against old rock, the soft kerplunk of canoe paddles, and the gurgle and rush of rivers that have been flowing down from the Blue Ridge Mountains toward the Chesapeake Bay for about fifteen million years.

The Rapidan and Rappahannock are about equally wide at their confluence, which occurs at a rock-strewn stretch of rapids about 15 miles upstream from Fredericksburg. Some early explorers chose to go up the westernmost of the two rivers because they either thought it to be the main river, or because they had been rightly informed that it provided the shortest of the two watery routes to the mountains.

The river they took was first named the rapid Ann, a name that reflects the stream's character. It dances down from elevations as high as 4,600 feet above sea level, being fed along the way by the Robertson and Conway rivers. However, the rocky stretches become less frequent as the Rapidan nears its junction with the Rappahannock, which occurs in a broad gorge 110 feet above sea level.

Because the Rapidan has sets of rapids interspersed with long, flat stretches of water, it is considered a good river for beginning canoeists to learn on. A day trip on the Rapidan can offer a few stomach-lightening drops over rock ledges, a little spray in the face and enough flatwater paddling to develop rhythm and muscle tone. One of the most popular trips begins at a Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries boat landing at Germanna Community College in Orange County and continues downstream eight miles to another Department-provided landing at the Ely's Ford Bridge on State Route 610 in Spotsylvania County. It takes four or five hours paddling, so that leaves ample time for fishing along the way.

As one sets out from the Germanna landing, the river quickly tugs the canoe downward through a set of rapids. Much of the trip, though, is along a languid river that flows between high, mud banks. There is nothing spectacular about the Rapidan, unless one's definition of the word encompasses moving peacefully down a small river that flows through a corridor of trees. On the Rapidan, as on the Rappahannock, the sense of being removed from

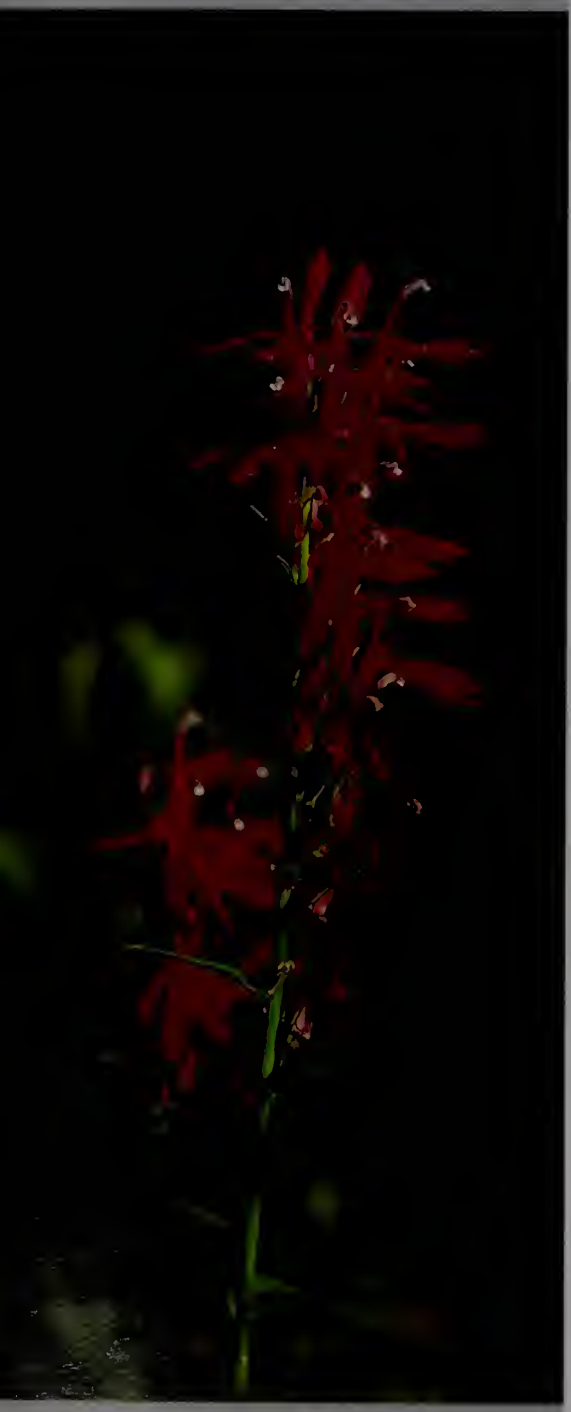
the modern world of asphalt and air conditioning is not something that requires a fertile imagination. Access to the rivers is limited by the fact that there are few places where one can put in or take out.

Below Ely's Ford, for instance, a canoeist must arrange access by private land or travel 16.5 miles to Motts Run Landing on the Rappahannock, which is just upstream from Fredericksburg. That can take as much as 14 hours. Consequently, countless canoeists have gone onto the Rapidan and Rappahannock with the assumption that they could put in somewhere and leisurely paddle down in a day to Motts Run Landing. Darkness, bad weather, high water or a combination of those misfortunes have overtaken them, and so they have had to spend the night on the wooded riverbank. In many cases, worried relatives and friends report them missing, and, by morning, the silence along the river has been broken by the sound of a helicopter manned by searchers from the Virginia State Police or the U.S. Marine Corps base at Quantico. Many faces have been reddened by that experience.

There have been times, too, when people have challenged the Rappahannock and Rapidan and lost their lives. A free-flowing river can be a thing of beauty—or a dealer of death. For instance, on a cool, rainy, Sunday afternoon this past spring, a 25-year-old man drowned when his canoe capsized in rolling, muddy rapids just upstream from where the whitewater Rappahannock becomes a tidal river at Fredericksburg. His 19-year-old partner clung to the canoe and was rescued within minutes by a kayaker who witnessed the accident. The body of the victim, however, was not recovered for more than a week; a shad fisherman happened to hook it and pull it ashore.

The Rappahannock can rise quickly. That is particularly true in the narrow upper reaches, where it is fed by the Thornton and Hazel rivers and many other fast-running streams that tumble down the eastern face of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Although the Rappahannock has its beginning in Chester Gap, which is near Front Royal, rain that falls at Big Meadows and other places within Shenandoah National Park flows into the Rappahannock.

From its beginning as an ever-widening merger of of mountain waters, the Rappahannock winds for 184 miles on a southeasterly path to the bay. For the first 20 miles, the river is too narrow and rocky to canoe, though.



Cardinal flower, a rare-looking, but actually prolific species in riparian habitats across the state, is one of the many wildflowers to look for on a leisurely float down the Rappahannock.

A bridge just east of the Rappahannock County town of Flint Hill offers canoeists what is generally considered the first location on the river where there is both access and—some of the time—sufficient water. It is 29 miles from there down to the Fauquier County town of Remington. The river meanders through woods and high banks, with few rapids and riffles along the way. Canoeists seeking whitewater thrills will find few along the route, except during spring rains, and other such times when any river can be dangerous. But it is a trip that offers peace.

This stretch is included in the 62-mile section of the Rappahannock that the 1985 Virginia General Assembly designated a Virginia Scenic River. The designation ends at the border between Fauquier and Stafford counties. The line was not drawn there because the Rappahannock is any less scenic downstream, but because the designation only had the necessary local political support in the counties of Fauquier, Rappahannock and Culpeper.

Running water is pretty anywhere. What makes it all the more enjoyable on the Rappahannock is that the river flows through a wooded corridor that is left largely unblemished by the hand of man. A canoeist traveling the 30 miles from Remington to Motts Run passes beneath only one bridge. That is a small one a few miles downstream at Kelly's Ford. What one sees instead is steep, wooded hills and a few fields.

Adding to a river rat's pleasure is the knowledge that the Rappahannock is considered one of the cleanest rivers in the eastern United States, and fishermen rank it as one of the best smallmouth bass rivers, as well. The river's biggest pollution problem is the siltation caused by rain, washing topsoil from farms, according to scientists who have studied the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Little industry exists along the river.

There are old timers who insist half-jokingly that the river's largest pollution problem is the visible presence of numerous canoeists. Not many years ago, it was possible to take a two-day, 25-mile trip from the bridge at Kelly's Ford to Motts Run and see few other people along the way. But, even with ever-increasing canoe traffic, the Rappahannock between Kelly's Ford and Motts Run is probably wilder now than it has been at any time since the mid-1700s.

To canoe it is to travel past overgrown farms, alongside stone walls that are the remnants of a 19th centry canal, and near old mines that were among the most productive in the nation until the California Gold Rush. During the Civil War, the Rappahannock was a curvy line of demarcation between Northern and Southern troops; blood often flowed into the water.

During this century, however, there has been little activity along the river. An industrialist envisioned a series of dams that would have powered various manufacturing operations, but only one small dam got built at Fredericksburg. Then, from the 1930s through the mid-1970s, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers periodically resurrected plans for the Salem Church Dam. Along the way, the utilities company now known as Virginia Power obtained 4,800 acres beside the river, subsequently selling it to the City Council in Fredericksburg.

The city's ownership of that land—which stretches along both sides of the river through Stafford, Spotsylvania and a little bit of Fauquier, Culpeper and Orange counties—is what, more than anything else now, makes canoeing the Rappahannock a prized experience. It is doubtful if there is anywhere else in the country where a local government owns an almost unbroken strip of land along both sides of a river that flows down into the city.

The future of the Rappahannock, therefore, will largely be in the hands of the Fredericksburg council. The eleven members will carry a lot of weight in determining if a dam ever gets built, or whether a park-like buffer continues to exist along a free-flowing river. Presently, City Council is not being pressured to make such a choice. Sooner or later, though, the issue will likely become a matter of considerable debate.

Until then at least, the Rappahannock and Rapidan will continue to attract lovers of free-flowing water. □

Larry Evans is an assistant city editor for the Fredericksburg Freelance-Star.

Floating the Rappahannock and Rapidan Rivers

This map shows the paddle times between the Game Department's access points on the Rappahannock and Rapidan Rivers, along with the fish likely to be caught in these areas. Boaters should add fishing and lounging times to our estimations.

This map does not show all obstructions, islands, or rapids. Before attempting a float trip, you should obtain a topographical map of the area. **Remember:** Personal flotation devices are required for each person in each boat, including canoes and kayaks. A state fishing license is also required to fish the rivers.

Floating the Rappahannock And Rapidan Rivers

KELLYS FORD

LEGEND

5 mile markers

approximate location of lands owned by Fredericksburg
SCALE IN MILES
0 1 2 3 4 5
Scale Pertains To Base Map Only
N
W
E
S
Richardsville
Germanna Ford
CULPEPER
ORANGE
CO
CO
RAPIDAN
MINE RUN
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15
RAPPAHANNOCK
FAUQUIER CO
STAFFORD CO
Starck
Hartwood
Paynes Corner
Berea
RIVER
20
10
15
CULPEPER
STAFFORD
CO
CO
WILDERNESS RUN
Elys Ford
ORANGE
SPOTSYLVANIA
CO
CO
Wilderness
Wilderness Corner
STAFFORD
SPOTSYLVANIA
CO
CO
25
Chancellorsville
30
RAPPAHANNOCK
Motts Run
Fivemile Fork
FREDERICKSBURG
SPOTSYLVANIA
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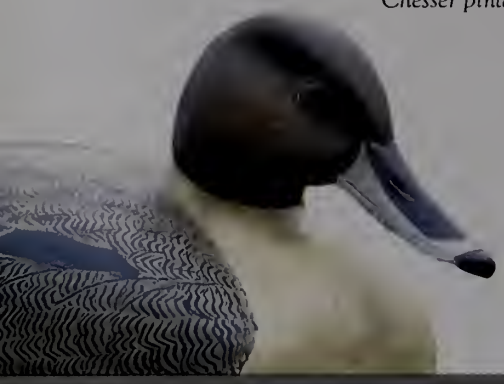
MOTTS RUN

Chesser pintail decoy



Grayson Chesser: A man of a classic time

Story & Photos by Curtis Badger

Photo opposite: *Grayson Chesser: a classic artist in an old tradition.*

Some say that Grayson Chesser was born 100 years too late. In this generation of satellite dishes and home computers, Grayson belongs to a time when life was slower and simpler.

"If I had been born a century earlier I would probably have been a market gunner," says Grayson. Grayson's elegant decoys line the shelves of many collectors of wildfowl art, but they seem almost as out of place on a shelf as Grayson himself would be in a punk rock video. Grayson's carvings have their artistic roots in another era; they are meant to be useful hunting tools, just as were the decoys made near Grayson's coastal Virginia home a century ago.

Grayson is a duck hunter and a decoy maker, and the two pursuits are so tightly woven that it is difficult to imagine him separating one from the other. But, two bits of evidence provide clues to where Grayson's priorities lie. He doesn't hunt upland game or deer ("If it doesn't have webbed feet, it doesn't have me to worry about"). And he won't waste time jump shooting or pass shooting ("I wouldn't go to much effort to pass shoot").

Grayson Chesser carves decoys in the tradition of Nathan Cobb, Miles Hancock, and Dave Watson. He is a rig-maker first, a decoy maker second.

Unless Grayson can shoot ducks over his handmade rig of decoys, he'd prefer another sport. But even if duck hunting were suddenly outlawed, you would probably still find an unarmed Grayson in the saltmarshes of Assawoman Bay each December, just waiting to see how well his new rig of decoys is fooling the black duck population.

"The rig is the important thing," says Grayson. "There's a world of difference between a decoy maker and a rig maker. A lot of carvers can make a single bird that looks good on the mantle, but they can't make a rig. All of their birds look alike."

Grayson's passion for the waterfowling tradition has led him down an artistic path seldom followed these days; it is a path that was well trod at the turn of the century when decoys were a working man's tool, a method of gathering an important cash crop for sale to city markets. Grayson makes decoys in this tradition, even though few of them ever see the water. He is a decoy-maker for hunters, yet at shows, his display is consistently one of the first sold out.

Grayson's carvings have none of the fluff of burned-in feathers, and you won't find carved inserts or other such modern niceties. His decoys are simple and elegant, and they are as tough as a hockey puck. Just what the market gunner of 1887 would have ordered.

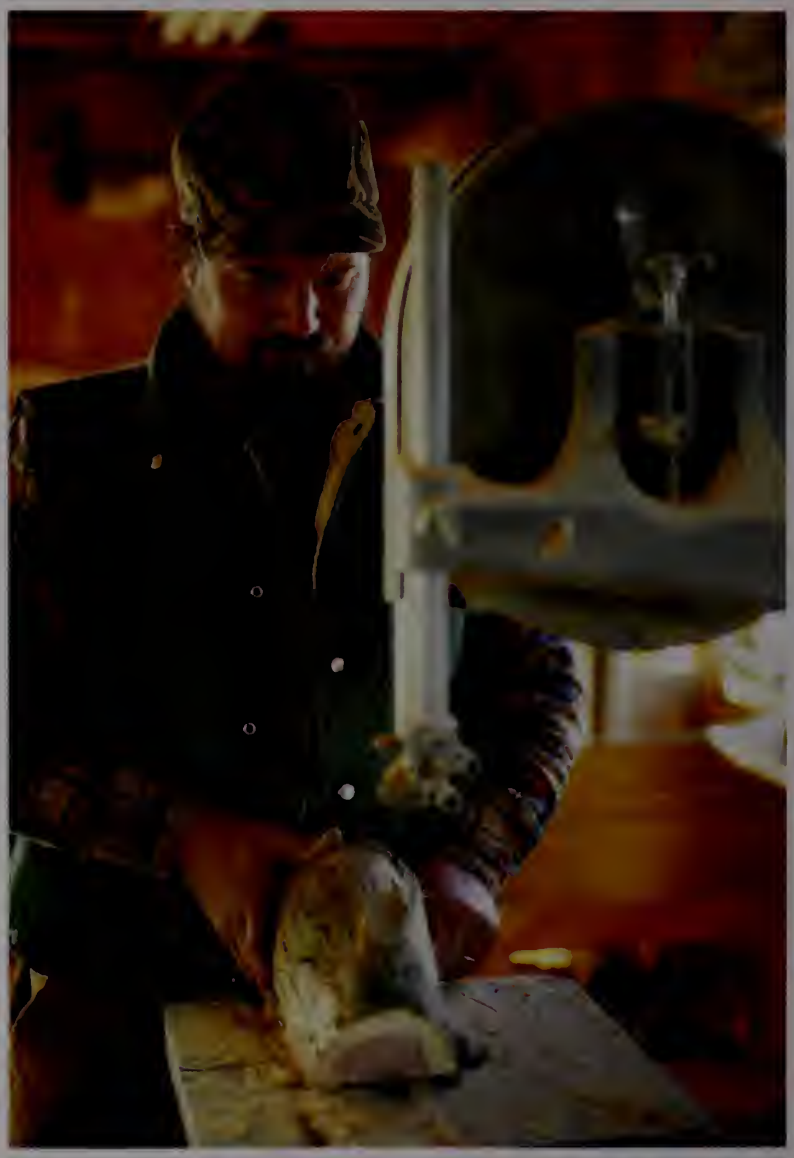
Not surprisingly, the two men who influenced Grayson the most are of that vintage. Nathan Cobb ran a hotel

and salvage business on a Virginia barrier island he bought in the mid-1880s. Although Cobb is one of the more colorful figures of local history, he will probably be best remembered for the duck decoys he made. "Nathan Cobb was a rig-maker," says Grayson. "Every bird was different. That's the way real birds are. You can have individual decoys in a rig that are not that good, but it is the cumulative effect that matters. That's one of the reasons I admire Cobb so. Nobody captured the spirit of a bird like he did, and he did it with a minimum of detail. All the life of a bird is in its neck and head position, and Cobb could capture that little tilt perfectly. It's a shame his decoys are scattered around the country now. I'd love to see his work brought together."

The second carver to influence Grayson was a Chincoteague Islander who spent much of his life in a Northampton County village called Willis Wharf, which is just a short boat ride from Nathan's Cobb's famous haunt. "I was at Miles Hancock's carving shop on Chincoteague and saw this old black duck decoy on his shelf. I told him I thought that decoy had about the prettiest head I'd ever seen, and he told me it was by Dave "Umbrella" Watson. Watson was a great painter and he influenced me in that direction. He made beautiful heads, but his decoys were too stiff. He couldn't bring it off like Cobb could."

Grayson believes that Watson was probably influenced by the work of Cobb, who was quite a few years his senior. "If you compare black ducks, especially the eyebrow ridge, you can see similarities. Watson's birds have that Northampton County look."

Grayson would have fit right in at Nathan Cobb's barrier island hunt club, but I doubt he would have had



Grayson Chesser at work on a decoy.

"... I decided I'd make my own decoys. They weren't especially good. Looked like four by fours with a two by four on top."

Above and below: *The formative stages of a Chesser decoy.*

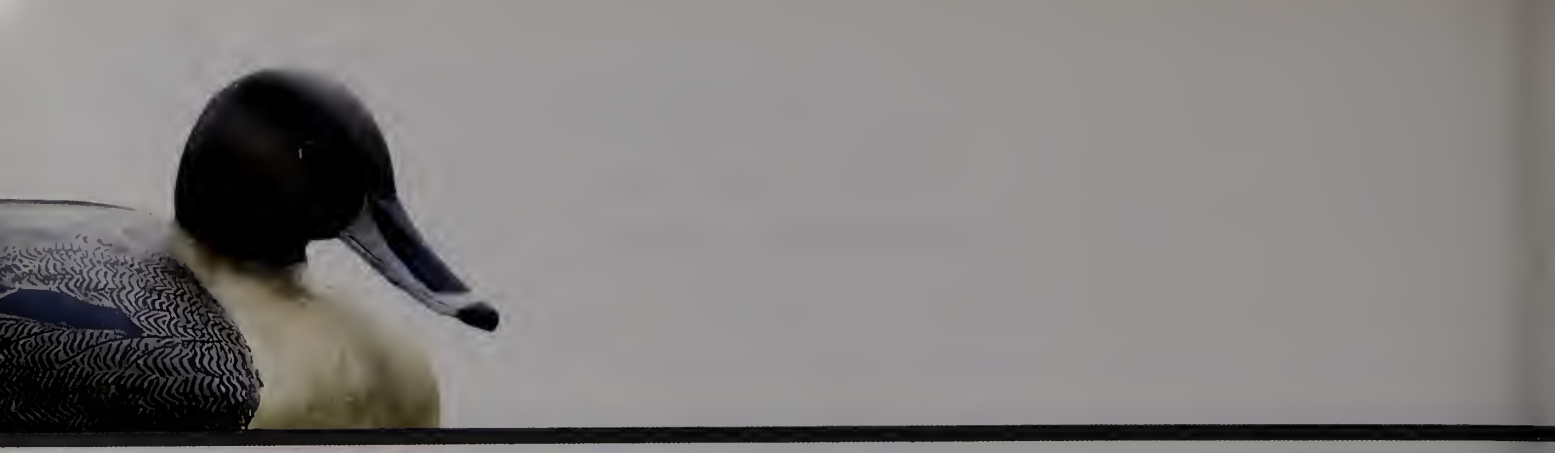
the credentials to be a market gunner. Grayson hunts, but he does so selectively. For the market hunter, the kill was the moment that mattered. To Grayson, the kill is secondary. To Grayson, one good shot at a good duck can make the experience. For the market gunner, it was always a matter of quantity over quality.

At 39, Grayson's face is tanned by a life spent outdoors, but there are few lines and wrinkles. His full dark beard has not yet become streaked with gray. His eyes are surprisingly light blue, and they quickly come to life when he talks about carving and hunting. Grayson's standard winter work uniform consists of several layers of flannel and wool shirts, jeans, and often hip boots when the season is in. He speaks slowly, with an Eastern Shore drawl. A chaw of Levi Garrett is usually lodged in his cheek.

This is the standard Grayson image; a down home country boy who put on his city clothes, shined his good shoes, and brought a few of his decoys out here to the art show. Living out there in the sticks like he does, he doesn't realize how good he is.

Grayson doesn't do much to alter this image. Few people know that he was consistently a dean's list student while earning a degree in business administration at Old Dominion University. Or that he's an expert on East Coast carving history. Or that he's a former game warden and a capable student of wildlife management. Or that he has an impressive book collection and enjoys a good conversation on sporting literature.

Hunting has always been important to Grayson, although he can't explain why. "I pestered my father to take me duck hunting when I was little, but I don't know why I had such a strong



desire to go. My father was a Virginia game warden, and one day he agreed to take me out on the state boat with some other wardens. They gave me three decoys and dropped me off on a point, and I killed an oldsquaw and a goldeneye that day. From then on I was hooked on it."

Grayson was also hooked on decoys. The three battered decoys were brought home and repaired, and a few more were added to the collection when birthday time came around.

"It was around that time that I decided I'd make my own decoys" says Grayson. "They weren't especially good. They looked like four-by-fours with a two-by-four on top. But I was pretty proud of myself and I took them up to Chincoteague to show to Miles Hancock. 'I think it would help if you rounded them up some,' he told me."

Grayson spent a lot of time with the well-known Chincoteague carver and learned a lot about hunting as well as decoy making. "Miles Hancock was basically a hunter who made decoys when he was too old to hunt. He wasn't a great painter, but he was better on basic design than a lot of people give him credit for. His decoys looked great in the water."

With the encouragement of Hancock and others, Grayson was a carver and collector by the time he was 14. "When I was 14, we went to the Shelburn Museum in Vermont, and that really got me interested in decoys. Back then nobody cared about decoys, and a woman who worked there, a Mrs. Fields, was so surprised at finding a young boy interested in decoys she showed me through the whole museum. That trip is what made me decide to collect decoys."

Fortunately, Grayson's interest in decoys began before the tremendous

Chesser is a decoy maker for the hunter, most concerned about rig making first, and he proves his success at his work in the field.

...I bought a Shourds goldeneye in original paint, an original paint Elkanah Cobb redhead and black duck. I paid $25 each."

Two Chesser classics: a black duck and widgeon.

price increases of the 1970s and 1980s. He could afford to buy a few good birds with money earned on the family farm. "In the early 1960s, $25 was a big price for a decoy. When I graduated from high school I had $300, and I bought a Shourds goldeneye in original paint, an original paint Elkanah Cobb redhead, and an Elkanah Cobb black duck. I paid $25 each. Back then you could buy Ward Brothers decoys for $5 and $10 each."

Grayson's friend and teacher, Miles Hancock, made him a graduation gift of the Umbrella Watson black duck he had admired years earlier. So as a teenager, Grayson, had the beginnings of a fine collection.

"I think a lot of people were collecting at that time, but the collectors didn't know each other. I think Bill Mackey helped get things rolling with his book, *American Bird Decoys*, then the folk art people got interested, and collectors started coming out of the woodwork. It was like a lot of little fires becoming one big fire, and prices started to go up. I think a lot of people realized that a way of life was passing. An era of American history was coming to a close."

Grayson in his own way, is helping to keep that era alive, or at least to extend it. "The important thing about a decoy is what it represents," says Grayson. "Our nation has become urbanized, and most people have never seen a big flock of brant, and probably never will. Decoys are a symbol of a time that has passed. They remind people of a more innocent, simpler time when the good guys wore white and the bad guys wore black." □

Curtis Badger is director of publications for the Wildlife Art Museum of the Ward Foundation in Maryland and is a frequent contributor to Virginia Wildlife.

"....and which shall include a prohibition against the diversion of license fees paid by hunters for any other purpose than the administration of said State fish and game department."

Very truly yours

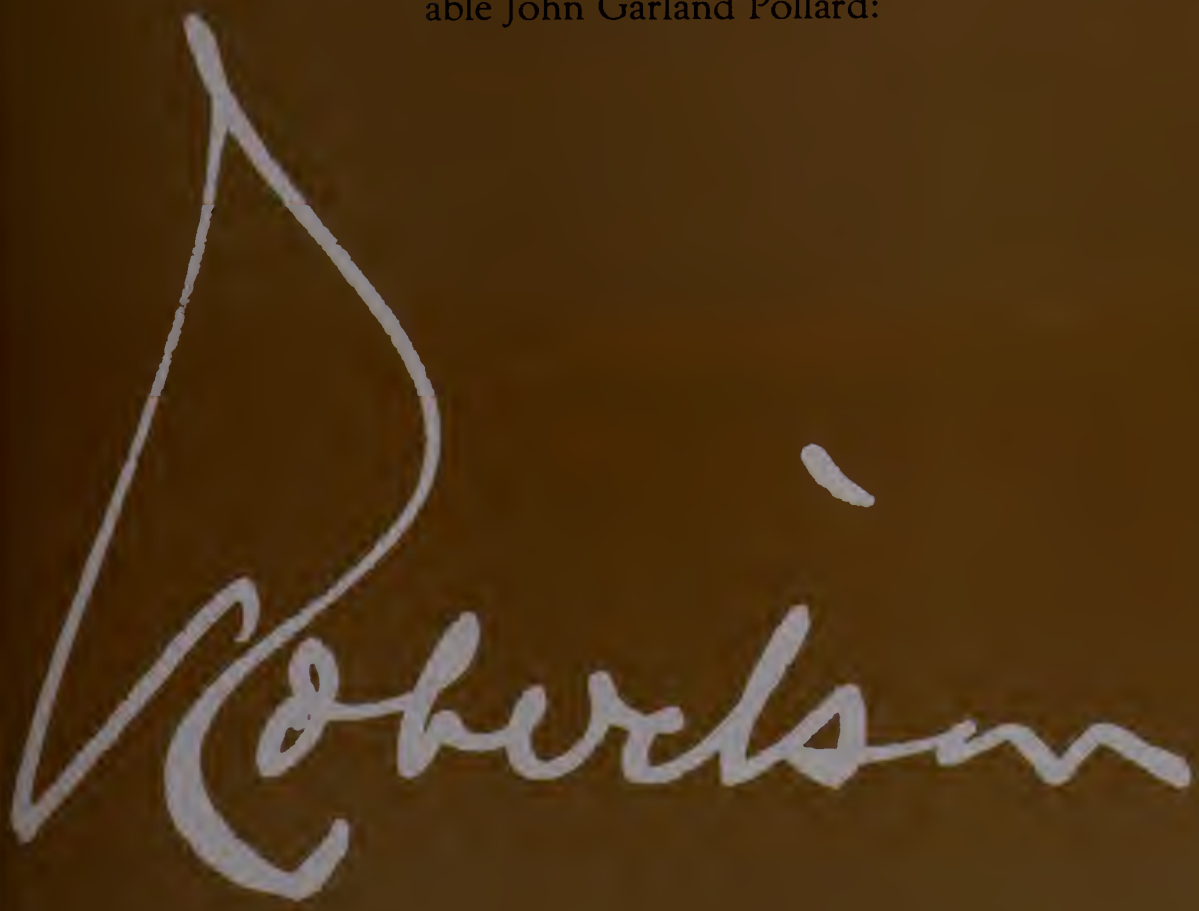
R. Green

"Insert these 29 words"

by Virginia Shepherd

According to his cousin and buddy Lewis Walker, Jr., after an early morning bird hunt in the mountains of Lexington, a certain Virginian used to stretch out on the ground, on a large flat rock—anywhere suitable—and take a nap after lunch. An hour later, the white-haired man hopped up and was ready for another covey, another field, another shot into the sky.

On March 29, 1930, in the middle of the Depression, this same man, then chairman of the Game Commission, composed a letter to the governor of Virginia, the Honorable John Garland Pollard:



"My dear Governor: . . . The Virginia Electric and Power Co. is planning a tremendous power development on the Roanoke River. . .The American Gas and Electric has purchased a site at Bug Island (sic) near Clarksville on the same stream and should these two proposed developments become an accomplished fact, here will be a tremendous area of flooded land . . . subject to a large fluctuation in water supply and possibly to the serious detriment of the wild life (sic) interests.

". . . I deem it to be of importance for some state agency to keep in close touch with these developments and to do something more than make isolated studies of stream flow or to consider the granting or refusal of permits when an application is submitted. This whole problem should be studied and correlated and some comprehensive plans worked out for the proper and orderly development of power resources of the state . . . . Respectfully, A. Willis Robertson."

This man didn't mince words. He got right to the point and didn't back down, even when he was proposing something bordering on revolutionary. Oh, he could be diplomatic, but he dogged the issues he believed in like a retriever on crippled ducks. Seems he never thought of running scared.

Seven years later, in 1937, while chairman of the House Select Committee on Conservation of Wildlife Resources in the U.S. Congress, Absalom Willis Robertson co-sponsored the Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration (P-R) bill, the most important piece of wildlife legislation ever passed in this country. In fact, 50 years ago this month, the bill became law.

People in the wildlife field give thanks for this law regularly, since it provided a secure means to pursue wildlife management and wildlife restoration across the country at a time when money at its best was scarce and at its worst was non-existent. It was also a time when, if something hadn't been done, there simply wouldn't have been any wildlife left to worry about restoring.

The bill captured the existing 10 percent manufacturers' excise tax on sporting arms and ammunition. It is allocated to the states each year based on a formula involving the number of paid hunting license holders and the land area of each state. Each year since the bill was passed, states have used up to 75 percent of P-R funds for any approved projects, including the purchase of land for wildlife rehabilitation purposes; the development of land to enhance wildlife; and research projects directed toward the solution of problems that stand in the way of wildlife restoration. And that bill is the only reason that we have deer, bear, turkey, and countless other wildlife in this state today, along with professional wildlife biologists that manage them.

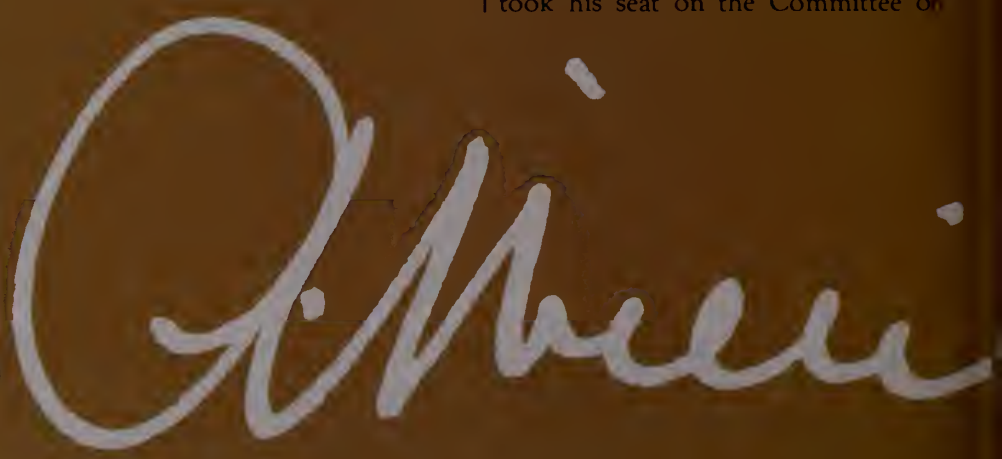
So successful was this program, that a companion fisheries bill, the Dingell-Johnson Act, was patterned after it. And by 1972, the P-R bill itself had been expanded to include handguns and archery equipment tax receipts, and hunter education and the construction of shooting ranges were added to the list of approved projects for funding.

But the money for wildlife never would have materialized if a huge loophole hadn't been knotted by A. Willis Robertson. Carl Shoemaker, the author of the original bill, clearly remembers handing Willis Robertson a draft copy of the bill one afternoon at lunch early in 1937, when he asked the gentleman from Virginia to co-sponsor the bill in the House. As the story goes, Robertson looked at the bill, took out a pencil and added 29 words to the draft. Handing it back to Shoemaker, he told him that he'd be glad to sponsor the bill with those changes.

The 29 words turned into the security system the legislation needed to accomplish the work that has gone on so far today. The vital words read: ". . . and which shall include a prohibition against the diversion of license fees paid by hunters for any other purpose than the administration of said State fish and game department . . ." Thus, it meant that if any state chose to divert their hunting license fees to any purpose other than wildlife conservation, they would automatically forfeit their share of the federal excise tax revenues.

There was a great day of eulogy, on the day after Robertson's death in 1972, in the U.S. Senate, where he had settled in for 20 years. The legislators sincerely praised the man who worked so hard for the conservation of wildlife in the country. But, they only knew the ending to the story. They only knew that Robertson had given teeth and power to the P-R bill, that he was a shrewd legislator with a mind for money matters, a progressive conservationist, and a remarkable shot with a 12-gauge shotgun.

The fact is, by the time A. Willis took his seat on the Committee on



Wildlife Resources in the House, he'd already waged the battles that gave him the right to sign his name to that piece of legislation in 1937. I'd wager that the P-R bill was Robertson's greatest personal achievement—and anguish—rested behind him in Virginia. Each of rested behind him in Virginia. Each of the 29 words he inserted into the bill, and each word of the bill that he sponsored, had been paid for already—in full. The words were not simply the ideas of an intelligent, progressive legislator. They were battle-weary words, scribbled down by a man who never gave up.

Robertson's story is one of the many that history books cheat us out of in their effort to save space and encourage simplicity. But there is nothing simple about supporting a tax diversion bill for wildlife at a belt-squeezing time in our nation's history. Something had to go before the bill, some human courage had to bushwhack a path.

One part of that explanation is still around, some of it bundled up in white storeroom boxes full of brown-edged letters, in those copies of correspondence signed by the chairman of the Game Commission from 1926-1932. All neatly tied or not so neatly stuffed into brown folders. Pencilled in dates on the cover, "1930 S-Z, 1931 March-April, 1929 Jan- March." Correspondence to and from disgruntled sportsmen; letters to Billy Reed and Buford Scott about hunting trips and a worthless pointer bird dog named "Betty;" carbon copies addressed to men with names like Byrd and Pollard; Pinchot and Leopold.

None of the correspondence is orderly after being bundled for some 60 years. Some of the telegrams have lost their order in the sequence, some letters are left undated.

But the thoughts are never out of order. A. Willis showed his fire in those years. It wasn't just your average burning conviction and commitment to an idea, either. It was an honest-to-goodness, devil-raising fire. The man wasn't scared of any idea, any man, or any work. And he could learn anything, be it how many gallons of water were needed to fill the troughs in a fish hatchery, or how to draft a foolproof legal document.

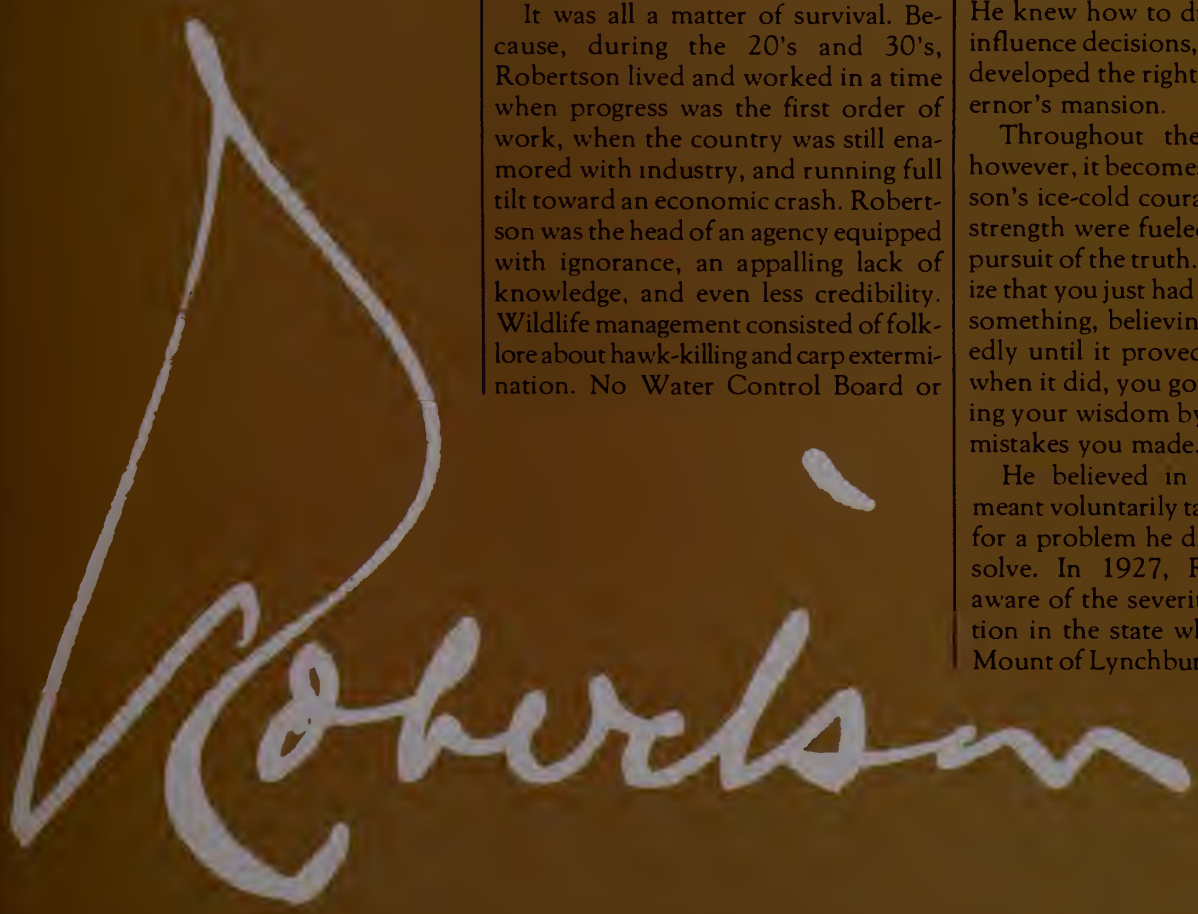
It was all a matter of survival. Because, during the 20's and 30's, Robertson lived and worked in a time when progress was the first order of work, when the country was still enamored with industry, and running full tilt toward an economic crash. Robertson was the head of an agency equipped with ignorance, an appalling lack of knowledge, and even less credibility. Wildlife management consisted of folklore about hawk-killing and carp extermination. No Water Control Board or Council on the Environment existed or had even been dreamed of, no clean air and water acts, no environmental groups ready to sniff out lies and deception. And no experts.

So Robertson had to learn the latest information himself, and even that was sketchy and incomplete. And, not only was there a lack of scientific information available on which to base decisions, but the Game Commission functioned as an openly political game in the 20's and 30's. The game laws were drafted and voted on in the General Assembly, revenue from the sportsmen of the state was appropriated to the Commission by the General Assembly, and it's a well-known fact that game wardens were part of the wheeling and dealing as well.

Legislators rode hard on Robertson to appoint game wardens sympathetic to their political party, since game wardens had the honor of transporting immobile backwoods voters to the polls every November. But Robertson knew the game. He'd already served in the Virginia Senate and as Commonwealth Attorney for Rockbridge County before he took on the Game Department. And he was a keen player. He knew how to draft legislation and influence decisions, and he had already developed the right friends in the governor's mansion.

Throughout the correspondence, however, it becomes clear that Robertson's ice-cold courage and intellectual strength were fueled by a bull-headed pursuit of the truth. He seemed to realize that you just had to go ahead and try something, believing in it wholeheartedly until it proved you wrong. And when it did, you got out of it, measuring your wisdom by the quality of the mistakes you made.

He believed in action, even if it meant voluntarily taking responsibility for a problem he didn't know how to solve. In 1927, Robertson became aware of the severity of stream pollution in the state when a certain M.B. Mount of Lynchburg spoke at a sports-



men's group in Richmond. Robertson made an investigation of the Covington paper mill on the James River and found a terrible problem with an easy, but unthinkable solution. Stopping the pollution meant shutting down the operation. There were no other alternatives.

Robertson, however, decided that if there were no known alternatives, he would make them. In 1928, he organized the Virginia Co-Operative Committee on Stream Pollution, a voluntary committee "to inquire into the extent, causes and effects of stream pollution in Virginia." The committee was composed of Robertson, representatives from industry, the League of VA Municipalities, the Izaak Walton League, the State Commission on Conservation and Development, and the State Department of Health. Their goals were to: "a) protect waters free from pollution, b) improve sanitary conditions of polluted waters, and c) improve water for drinking purposes, for industrial and agricultural use, and for the propagation of fish and other recreational activities." Pretty radical stuff in those days.

But Robertson didn't stop there. He decided to take on the law. In a 1929 letter responding to an inquiry about stream pollution in the state, he wrote "While everyone in the state interested in conservation deplores the widespread and detrimental pollution of our streams, those who have made even a cursory study of this subject realize that it is the biggest problem in behalf of conservation which has ever been tackled in the state. While it may appear to some that very little so far has been accomplished toward the solution of this problem, it should be borne in mind that the problem has been existing in an objectionable form for at least 25 years during which time nothing whatever was done and any effort to even tighten up on the pollution laws has always been unsuccessful."

Robertson knew full well what he was getting into by tackling the conservation laws of the Commonwealth. A skilled attorney and lawmaker who had spent six years in the Virginia Senate, the man knew the evils of unenforceable laws and the trickery of loopholes. But he also knew how to operate. In 1929, he wrote to Governor Pollard: ". . . it will be necessary for us to tackle in a serious way the important subject of stream pollution which is a very troublesome one in view of the sharp conflict between the interests of industrial plants and of other citizens. At the present time there are no pollution laws for Tidewater Virginia, and the law prohibiting pollution in the remainder of the state carries a penalty of only five dollars."

Even with his political savvy and commitment, however, Robertson's battle to revamp the state's pollution laws didn't yield much except frustration. The pollution bills he drafted for the General Assembly were either emasculated or tabled. But he kept drafting them, from 1928 through 1931. Defeat just seemed to make him tougher.

But there was something else about Robertson. Maybe it had something to do with his upbringing, with the fact that he was the son of a Baptist missionary minister who didn't give a hoot for those things of this world. Or, maybe it had something to do with his firm sense of right and wrong, and an old-fashioned sense of duty. Whatever it was, Robertson never questioned whether or not he was doing the right thing when he balked the sportsmen of the state, the governor, or private industry. He followed his own uncompromising vision of getting his job done in the most diplomatic way possible. Sometimes, the most diplomatic way didn't work, but he was a man of convictions, and when his rational explanations fell on deaf ears, moral indignation took over.

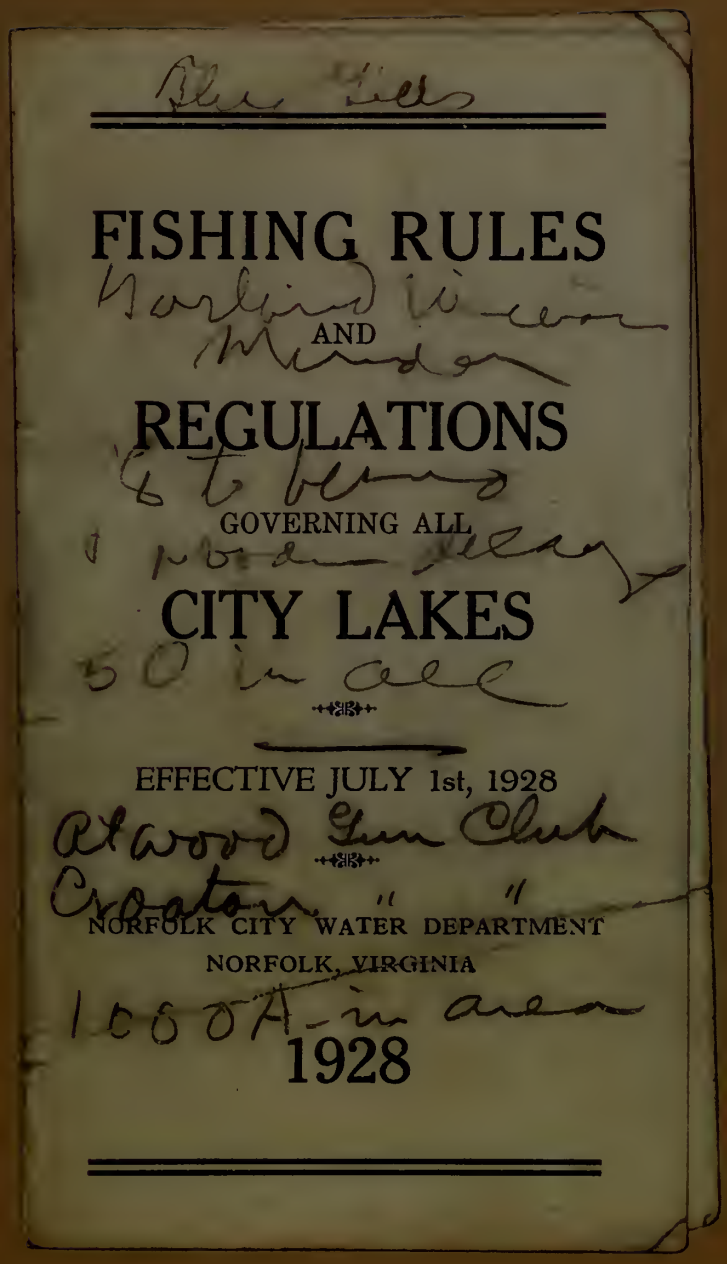
Like when the drought of 1930 dried up the streams and scorched the fields, and the Commission had to vote to end the hunting season early statewide on December 31st. On December 16, two days before the Commission meeting Robertson wrote to Joseph Knapp of New York: "The drought of the past summer almost wiped out our quail crop and, of course, under our present system the only substantial recourse left to our Commission is have shooting next year was to stop further shooting this year. Consequently, we closed 21 counties on December 6th and meet in Richmond Thursday to consider closing the remainder of the state on December 31st. This action on our part has been very unpopular with many hunters and naturally their condemnation of me has not added any to my Christmas good cheer. When we meet in Richmond Thursday I intend to frankly tell the assembled throng that if they do not like the present method of game management, I will be glad to cooperate with them in adopting your method (of commercial game propagation) on that they need not expect to take the benefits of both and endeavor to shift the burdens . . .

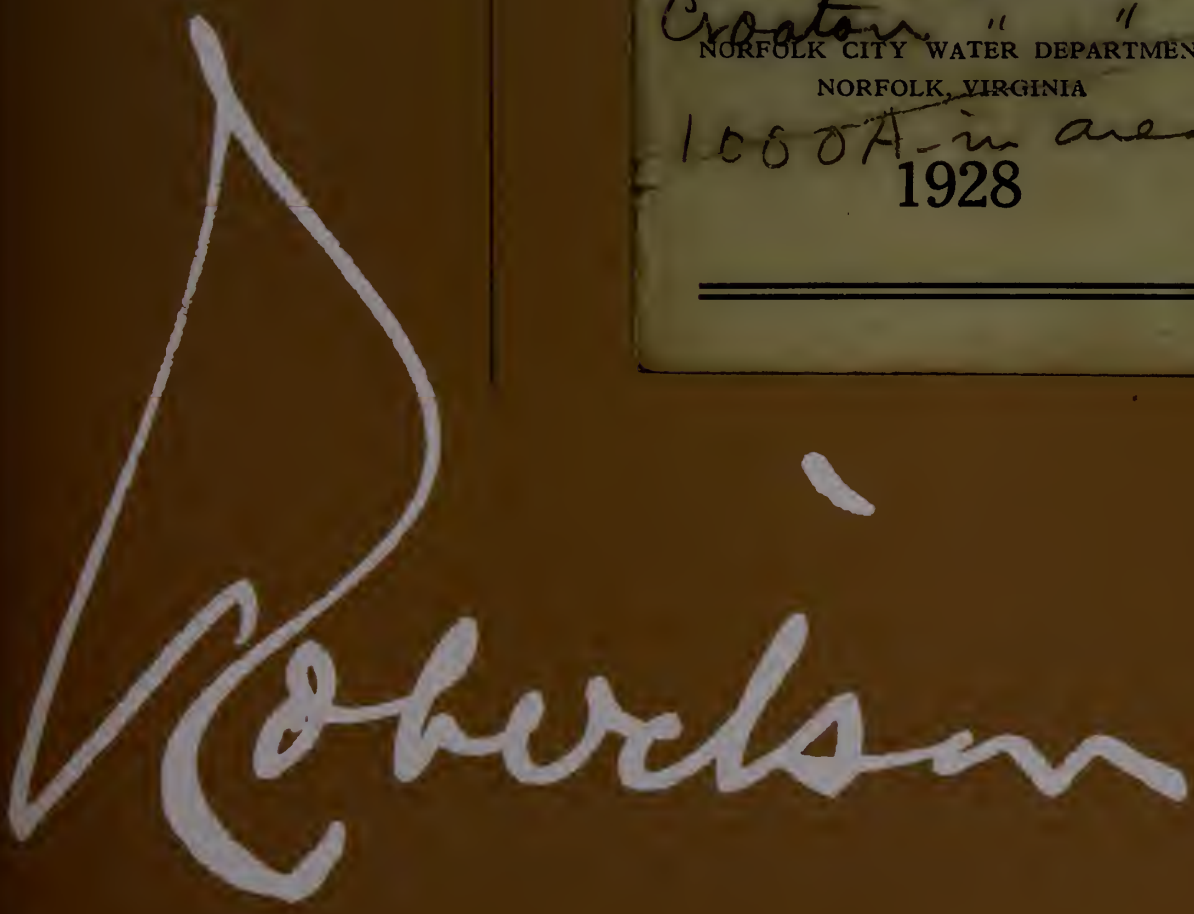
The situation now is, in my opinion, critical and calls for real constructive rehabilitation or else very stringent restrictions on hunting for the next two or three years. Since the hunters insist upon hunting, they might as well make up their minds to do something toward producing a crop."

Seven days later, however, when the Commission didn't stand their ground and compromised on the closing, an unamused Robertson responded to a letter from Rorer A. James, Jr., the publisher of the *Danville Register and Bee*:

"In my opinion, there should be no hunting anywhere in Virginia after that date (December 31st), but a majority of the Commission desired to include the remainder of the Christmas holidays in the open season and to exclude twenty-four counties from the closing order where the citizens protested against what we regarded as necessary action for a future supply of game.

"Had a majority of the citizens of Pittsylvania and Henry counties indicated a desire to continue hunting in those counties through January, I am





sure it would have been the pleasure of the Commission to extend that privilege to them even though it might have resulted in the complete extermination of their game . . .

"You may own land in Pittsylvania or Henry or both in which there is a fair amount of game and a few other wealthy sportsmen may do likewise, but you, of course, realize that laws must be made with respect to general conditions and with respect to what the average man is going to do and on that basis the season in Pittsylvania should have been shortened some years ago."

Robertson not only confronted the truth, he *bullied* it. He had a nasty habit of addressing the unthinkable with a righteous conviction.

When he took charge of the Game Commission in 1926, he was determined that every penny of the money the sportsmen of Virginia gave to the Game Protection Fund be justified in terms of game conservation. And he guarded these pennies like a hen turkey on eggs. Thus, when the Depression sucked up the Game Protection funds, Robertson addressed the Commission on December 4, 1931. He coldy presented the facts with an equally heartless but necessary solution:

". . . The financial difficulties, which I . . . anticipated, have fully developed resulting in 1930 in our exceeding our receipts by nearly $60,000 and for the current biennium our deficit will be even larger, wiping out every penny of our accumulated surplus, unless drastic curtailments be affected."

". . . Frankly, I can not point with any degree of pride to a substantial increase in either game or fish during the past 5 years of our administration.

". . . Unless, therefore, our Commission looks these facts squarely in the eye and develops some way of increasing the supply of wild life (sic) without reducing the shooting privilege to the point where the average hunter will quit in disgust our administration of this natural resource is going to be regarded as a failure.

"If we were financially situated like Pennsylvania or New York, with ample funds to maintain a high wage scale and at the same time engage in an ambitious restocking program, I would be delighted to go along with the Commission in any salary increase it might favor. To continue to raise salaries at the expense of our restocking progream would be nothing short of suicidal. With that in view, I have already recommended on several occasions to the Commission that all salaries from the chairman down be cut and I think the 6 supervising wardens could well be cut to $175.00 each."

The man took the heat head on. Still, he was human, and the fire left some burns. He wrote a bitter letter on August 20, 1929 to his great friend, Billy Reed of Richmond: "My dear Billy . . . I have been rushed to death all of the summer and owing to unsettled political conditions, or the inactivity of our wardens, or a growing consciousness of the value of wild life (sic), I have gotten more kicks recently concerning various and sundry matters than at any time during the past three years and it has kept me busy trying to keep the various complainers and criticisers satisfied. Anyone who has an idea that a public job is a bed of roses should just lie on it for a few months and he will soon find that the thorns are more prominent than the perfume."

And, on November 1, 1929, he composed a frustrated letter to the chairman of the state Game Commission in Alabama, the Honorable I. T. Quinn:

". . .The bane of existence of everyone officially connected with wild life (sic) conservation is some self appointed and self annointed regulators who assume unto themselves complete knowledge concerning the whole field of wild life (sic) conservation and accuse all others who do not fully agree with them either of ignorance or of being actuated by some ulterior motive."

But the fire that burned was also cracking open seeds in Robertson's mind. As he agonized over his dwindling game funds, a more serious danger threatened his agency. While Robertson was demanding sacrifice from his own employees to make ends meet in a terrible economic crisis, the state was eyeing the Game Protection funds for relief themselves. In 1932, the Virginia Senate proposed diverting 20% of Game Protection Fund to general governmental purposes. Said Robertson in a letter to H. W. Rhodes on February 20: ". . . This would be such unfair treatment to the sportsmen who contributed to the Game Protection fund that I can not imagine it will be favorably treated by the Senate. Ever since the Game Department was created the law has specifically provided that fish and game work could get no assistance from the General Treasury, but it has likewise been as specific in providing that the Game Protection fund shall not be raided."

By 1932, the General Assembly considered abolishing the department altogether to ease the tax burden on its citizens. On February 10, in a letter to H. A. Renner, Robertson explained:

". . . A great many farmers are laboring under the delusion that the Game

Department is a direct taxation on them and that they would save money by abolishing it lock, stock and barrell (sic). The important thing is to keep before the members of the General Assembly the fact that the Game Department is an activity voluntarily supported by those who hunt and fish and no one contributes to it that does not wish to do so."

But, by the time Robertson left the Game Commission at the end of 1932 to take his seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, he was still fighting to keep the agency from falling apart after his departure. The General Assembly was ready to dissolve Robertson's position at the Game Commission once he left, and the *Richmond News-Leader* recorded the battle in an article on December 21, 1932: "Economy proposals for (the Game Commission) under consideration by the State Senate retrenchment committee were vigorously denounced today by Major A. Willis Robertson, retiring game chairman.

" 'I don't approve of any of them,' said Robertson . . . 'If a department which has increased its receipts by more than 50%, or approximately $100,000 in the past few years does not deserve a chairman; if its activities are not real recreational assets and of natural value to the state, then why temporize with 2 or $3,000—why not just throw out the whole department.' "

So, when he left the Game Commission for Washington, Robertson was weighed down with baggage from his years in Virginia, much of it scarred with frustration and indignation, but no less tough and durable.

Lucky for us, Robertson stuck to his convictions in Washington, and had a stab at the wildlife bill of 1937.

But, it wasn't just luck. Robertson had been on the course to it all his life. Even while he was waging his own conservation wars in Virginia, he was also keeping step with the national movement in the wildlife field. Concerned especially about the plight of waterfowl, Robertson served on Aldo Leopold's Game Policy Committee. He was singled out to serve on a subcommittee charged with figuring out a way to fund the Migratory Bird Conservation Act, a bill that established a migratory waterfowl federal refuge system, but had provided no money to run the program. Robertson had already labored over the ways to fund something as progressive as wildlife conservation, and had turned over in his mind the idea of an excise tax on guns and ammunition to secure money for wildlife in a fund that couldn't be "raided." It wasn't much of a leap, then to make to signing his name to the P-R bill in 1937. And by the time that day rolled around when Robertson sat at lunch with Carl Shoemaker, the 29 words that protected that precious fund probably came easily, as quickly as he could scratch them out.

We bring up the past too little, even here in Virginia. There is a portrait hanging in the Game Department's office in Richmond of A. Willis Robertson, that his friend Lewis Walker commissioned for the Department a few years ago. So many people walk under it, occasionally looking up and admiring the striking portrait of a strong-jawed gentleman from Lexington. But few know the story behind that painting. Few feel the fire that fueled the man's courage and aggravated those with less strength and moral conviction.

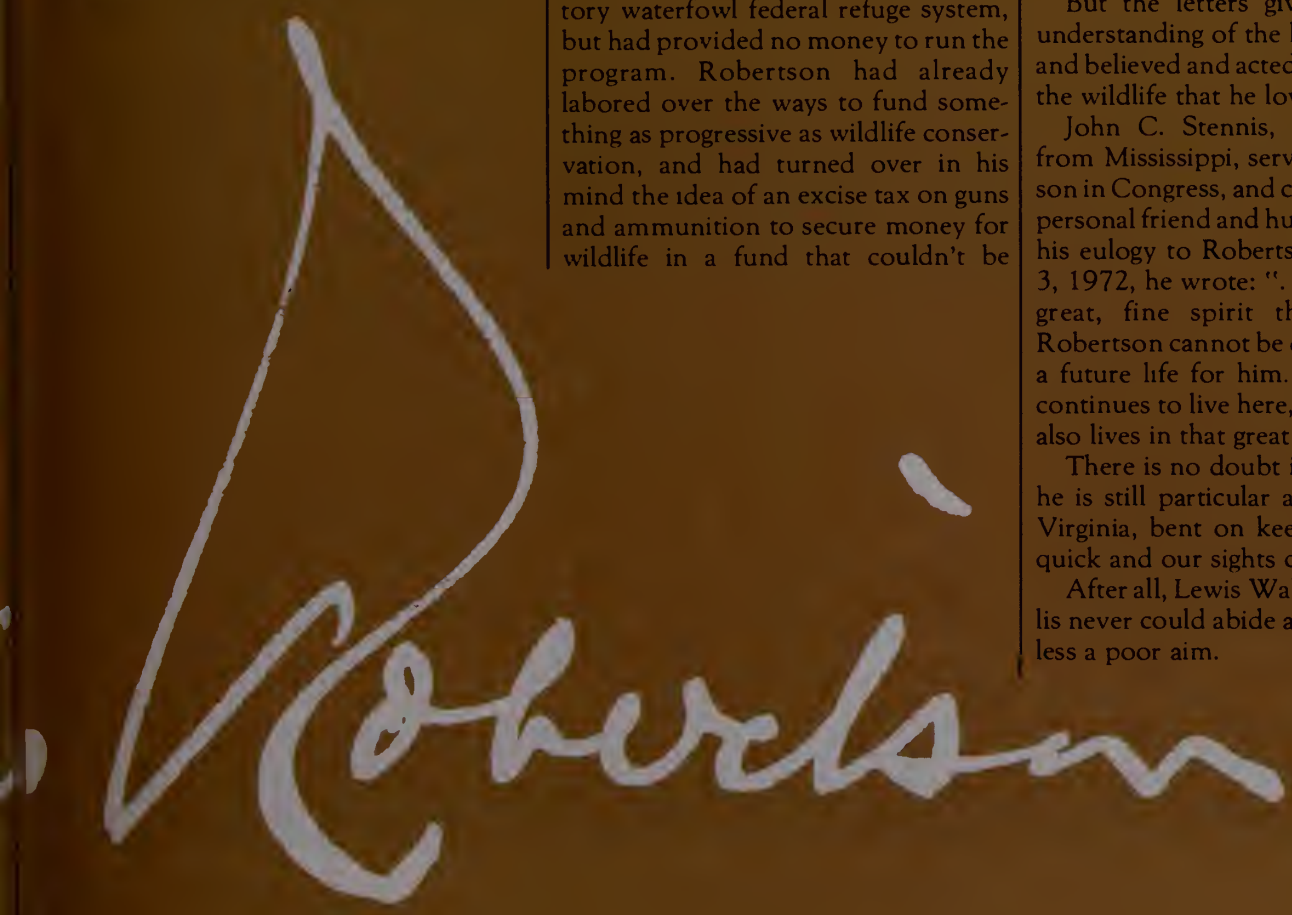
And you can't feel it unless you dig into the papers, into the words of his friends and peers. The laws that he drafted don't tell of the discouraging battles, the stubborn character, the insistence on action and mistakes to root out the truth.

But the letters give us a hint of understanding of the leader that cared and believed and acted when it came to the wildlife that he loved.

John C. Stennis, a U.S. Senator from Mississippi, served with Robertson in Congress, and came to be a great personal friend and hunting partner. In his eulogy to Robertson on February 3, 1972, he wrote: ". . . I feel that the great, fine spirit that was Willis Robertson cannot be dead . . . There is a future life for him. His spirit lives, continues to live here, and I am sure it also lives in that great beyond."

There is no doubt in my mind that he is still particular about us here in Virginia, bent on keeping our minds quick and our sights clear.

After all, Lewis Walker said A. Willis never could abide a bad shot, much less a poor aim.



Two bulldozers at work reclaiming an old silica mine on Goshen Wildlife Management Area.

Healing Scarred Land

A wild storm out of the North Atlantic kicks up a new sand dune along the Virginia coast; out in the Pacific a new volcanic island surfaces. We add a few acres of land. A major earthquake sinks part of the Alaska coast. We lost some.

Balance the pluses and the minuses and the overall change is insignificant. An aging, but defiant, farmer put it in perspective when he testily told an ambitious developer, "they ain't making no more land."

A sobering thought, but the truth. The hard truth. They ain't.

Nope, we have to make do with what we have.

But our population is growing—rapidly. That's our problem, increasing demands on limited land. A recent demographic estimate placed the world population at 5 billion people, and growing at the rate of 220,000 daily. Why, that's like finding room for a major new metropolitan area every day! Much of that growth is right here in Virginia.

A new sand dune may create a productive new surf fishing slough, but it isn't going to change significantly the 40,817 square miles we call the Old Dominion. We can, however, take better care of what we have, something we haven't always done in the past. Over the generations we have abused, battered, misused, and scarred our land, and too often officialdom didn't blink an eye. Fortunately, that's beginning to change. A refreshing new environmental awareness is asserting itself. Officialdom *is* beginning to blink now—to reveal a steely eye.

And acting.

A good example is the Orphaned Land Project being administered by the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy. The project was authorized by the 1978 General Assembly, its mission being to reclaim land disturbed by the surface mining of feldspar, fill dirt, granite, gravel, limestone, manganese, sandstone, silica, and other minerals. No, not coal land. There the federal government has assumed responsibility. Prior to 1968 there apparently was not a law on the books with teeth enough to protect the land from abuse. The mining operators simply pulled up stakes and abandoned the devastated and all but useless land.

On Goshen Wildlife Management Area some land healing is taking place on an old silica mining site, with the help of a progressive new reclamation fund.

by Bob Gooch

While we now have laws and the enforcement tools to protect our land, those old scars are still there to haunt us. We have trails to retrace, long trails littered with our blunders. It will be a long journey.

"I've got enough work to last me until I retire," said Allen Bishop, Orphaned Land Supervisor.

A project of particular interest to sportsmen is the reclamation of an old silica mine on the Game Department's Goshen Wildlife Management area in Rockbridge County. A mere 100 acres, it seems infinitesimal when measured against the 16,000-acre mountainous and picturesque wildlife management area. But it is an ugly scar on Bratton's Mountain, a blot that can mar an otherwise pleasant visit to the little hamlet of Goshen, a place to relax, to fish for bass and trout, or to hunt for grouse and squirrels or bear and turkeys. It is 100 acres of barren, unproductive land that dumps sediment into the Maury River, noted for its bass and trout fishing.

Nature has made a futile effort to heal the land, to hide the scars inflicted in the late 1940's, the 1950's and 1960's, and the early 1970's. Nature can work wonders, but she sometimes needs the help of man in repairing the damage he does, damage left by the companies that pulled out with the unblinking blessings of officialdom of another era.

"We're reclaiming about 20 acres a year," said Bishop as he watched a pair of bulldozers busily moving tons of sandy clay earth, knocking the top off of a steep cliff, and striving for a 33 degree slope.

The Virginia taxpayer is not footing this bill. The money comes from the Minerals Reclamation Fund, a fund supported by the mining industry, an industry paying for the errors of its predecessors.

Once the Goshen land has been graded to an acceptable gradient, it will be seeded with grass, legumes, and tree seedlings. Included will be autumn olive, and black and bristly locust, mast-producing trees and shrubs to control erosion and provide food for wildlife. Then, Gene Sours, the Game Department's wildlife management area supervisor, will take over. By law, the Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy can restore the land only to its minimum potential. It then becomes the landowner's responsibility.

"Our plans are not firm yet," says Sours. "We may allow it to revert to forest cover as it was originally."

Making new land? Hardly. The annoyed farmer was right. We can't make new land, but there are many battered acres we can reclaim.

That helps. □

Bob Gooch is an outdoor writer living in Troy, Virginia.

Bowhunting Beyond Bucks

Bowhunting is not limited to the deer season. Archers can hone their skills on small game as well.

Story & photos by Bruce Ingram

There are those who say that hunting for small game with a bow and arrow would be like going after a bear with a stick. In other words, the sportsman is likely to come out on the short end of the stick or arrow, depending on the situation.

Johnny Grace, owner-operator of On Target Archery in Salem, Virginia, knows that bowhunting for squirrels and rabbits is a rather uncommon—some would say perverse—pastime. But there is method to his madness.

"Bowhunting for small game is a great way to build confidence in your archery skills," he says. "If you can go into the woods and hit a squirrel consistently, you will believe without a doubt that you can hit a much larger deer or turkey.

"I also think that bowhunting for squirrels during the early September season will help you to avoid buck fever when the deer season begins. Of course, there's no comparing getting a squirrel with killing a deer. But anytime that you are in the situation of trying to hit something that is alive, it has to help you in becoming a more proficient shot."

There are other benefits as well for the archer who seeks out early season bushytails. The September forest is often uncrowded, making this an excellent time to look for deer and turkey sign. Those two species share the gray squirrel's penchant for mast, making the same oak-hickory forest you hunt in early fall a likely buck and turkey hangout later in the season. Game animals are also not as wary as they will soon become once hunting season begins—affording the outdoorsman a good chance at spotting his future quarry. Bucks and birds aside, silvertails themselves have much to offer the Virginia bowhunter.

"Squirrels are very challenging," says Grace who lives in Roanoke. "Once they come into range you have to be ready to take a shot. They don't sit still very long and they are very nervous little animals. Generally, I recommend shooting at them while they are not moving. Fred Bear can hit a flying pheasant and a running squirrel or rabbit, but most people, including myself, can't. Just be ready when the squirrel does stop moving. You don't want to rush your shot, but you don't want to dawdle either. With any animal, of course, what you want is a good, clean kill and a sitting squirrel gives you the best chance for that."

The archer can employ some of the same hunting methods that the gun carrier has at his disposal, but not all of them. For example, in September a shotgunner can stalk bushytails when they are feeding among the hickories. This tactic is usually not a good one for the bowhunter, though. First, the archer must get much closer to his quarry than the gunner. And, if the squirrel should bolt, the archer is faced with a darting target fleeing through a tangle of tree limbs and leaves—not an enviable shot.

Stand hunting, however, both on the ground or in a tree is an effective option. If the bow enthusiast is aware of what the silvertails are currently foraging on, he need only situate himself near the food source. In early fall, squirrels will typically be gorging on the fare produced by mockernut and pignut hickories. But if these two tree varieties did not bear well that particular year, or if the cut nuts beneath the trees appear old, go on to other menu items. Black walnut groves and white oak stands are good secondary choices to take a stand by. Squirrels travel a great deal and if you find an area which has not been totally worked over by them, sooner or later a gray should come within range.

Still hunting is yet another tactic the bowman can employ for silvertails.

"Stand hunting is by far the best way to hunt squirrels," says Johnny Grace, "but still hunting will do well at times. If you should come across one feeding in a tree, stay 15 or 20 yards away. Move in any closer and you'll spook the squirrel. Stay out any further and the average bowhunter will be out of range. I know there have been plenty of stories about bowhunters shooting a squirrel or rabbit at fifty, sixty, or more yards away. Just like you hear tales about some rifleman hitting a deer at some fantastic distance. I really don't put much faith in those stories. Know what your own range is and try to stay within it.

"It's also important to be aware that an arrow shot into the air can carry several hundred yards, so check first to see which direction it will be going. When squirrels are in the trees, it's best to use flu-flu arrows. They will carry like normal ones for 25 yards and then slow down drastically because of their very large fletchings. The oversized fletchings also help in retrieving an arrow—especially if it has bright feathers, too."

Another part of an arrow which is very important is the point. For small game, there are basically three kinds of points—judo, adder, and blunt tipped.

Judos have flat conical tips that have four spring loaded arms which keep arrows from burrowing into leaves and grass. Adders possess a star-shaped disc that screws in behind the field point. Adder points don't penetrate very far into an animal's body, but they do inflict a wide wound channel which usually results in a quick death. Blunt tips do not have a point on the end and rely on the shock caused upon impact to kill an animal.

Johnny Grace prefers judo points, believing that they can withstand a great deal of abuse from stumps and rocks—thus making them a good buy in the long run. However, Randy Brookshier, a Salem policeman, feels that blunt tips are superior for small game.

"Judo points are good, but they are fairly expensive, costing from four to five dollars each," he says. "Most of your shots for squirrels will be into trees and that makes it fairly easy to lose an arrow. Blunt tips are much cheaper and easier to use. I buy cedar shafts, glue .38 special casings on the end of them, and I have an arrow that costs only about fifty cents. It also kills super fast and that's what you want to do."

Brookshier, who has tagged a Pope and Young buck with a bow, also has some interesting advice on which kind of bow to pair with your arrows and points.

"Whichever bow you are going to use to hunt deer should also be the one you use for small game," he says. "Deer hunting is a big part of the reason you go after small game and why you practice so much at ranges. Small game gives you an excellent test of your equipment. Not only that, the early squirrel season gives you a good chance to do pre-season scouting for bucks.

"The same holds true for your clothing—regardless of what you wear. If my clothes are going to interfere with the shot or the shooting position I take, I need to know during the squirrel season—not when I'm aiming at a buck."

Rabbits pose a different kind of challenge for the archer. Obviously it would be rather difficult—perhaps even comical—for a bowhunter to follow

The popular compound bow favored by most archers. **Inset:** *A selection of points for small game:* **left to right:** *judo points, adder points, and blunt tips.*

along behind a pack of beagles.

"The only way to go after rabbits is to still hunt," says Grace. "A cottontail will often sit very tight even if he's aware that you are there. If you are walking across a field and the rabbit is on the other side 50 or 60 yards away, you can bet that he has seen you long ago. I don't think I've ever really surprised a rabbit by coming upon him.

"The easiest way to spot them, if they are not moving, is to look for their round dark eye. The rest of a cottontail's body blends in so easily with the environment that it's hard to pick them out any other way. Look for brush, clumps of grass, dead overturned cedars or pines, fencerows, any kind of brushpile, and outer edges of briar patches."

Once that bunny is glimpsed, it's wise not to walk directly toward it. If the animal feels it has been discovered, it almost certainly will flee—presenting the bowman with a practically impossible shot. The rabbit will also probably take off if the hunter stops abruptly. Assuming that the creature does dash away, try to ascertain which brushpile it has beaten a retreat to. A cottontail will usually run only 50 yards or so away and you may be able to relocate it.

One final tip involves "brushpile thrashing" which is so effective with shotgunners and dogs. It's best that the bowhunter not enter thick cover, because he won't be able to let loose an unobstructed shot. If possible, try to stay around the edges of briar patches and similar habitat so that you can get off a better shot.

One aspect that has not been discussed so far is perhaps the most essential one—the bow itself. In the past, recurve bows were preferred by most Virginia sportsmen and they still have their advocates today.

"I use an 80-pound recurve," says Brookshier who lives in Roanoke. "The romantic in me is the reason why, I guess. Recurves were the ones people used in the old days. They are graceful in their shape, pretty in their design, and they are lighter and quieter than compounds with their heavy and noisy pulley system. Mine is also more compact than most compounds and that makes it easier to take on trips.

"Plus, squirrels are very alert game animals. If you can get one out of every five you shoot at, you're doing well. Thus, a recurve gives you an advantage because it will make less noise when the arrow is released. A compound is so loud that the animal may jump when you shoot, causing your aim to be a little off."

Rabbits can be a challenging quarry for the archer.

Today, however, compounds are favored by the majority of Old Dominion archers. Compounds, with their pulley system, allow the hunter to hold on his target longer. This is because they can reduce the amount of weight you are drawing by 50% or more.

"Compound bows are good for small game and for deer," says Grace. "They have done more to make bowhunting available to the average person than anything else. Until compounds came about in the 1970's, recurves and longbows were what everybody had. Compounds are so much easier to draw, to hold in position, and to aim—you don't have to have great physical strength to use one. It really takes someone who is in great shape and who has a lot of time to practice to shoot a 50-pound recurve.

"Almost any average male can shoot a 50-pound compound and an average female can do 30 pounds to start. Ladies can work up to 45 or 50 pounds just like the men in a fairly short time. Compounds now even give you faster arrow speed than recurves and that wasn't true in the past. And every year there seem to be such major advances in archery equipment."

There is much more to bowhunting than bucks. Using a bow to hunt small game animals such as squirrels and rabbits can provide Old Dominion outdoorsmen with excellent sport and more opportunities to venture afield. And what can be better than spending additional time in the state's woods and fields? □

Bruce Ingram lives in Salem, and is the Virginia editor of Outdoor Life.

1987 VIRGINIA HUNTER'S GUIDE

Licenses Required

If you hunt, you must have a valid license. Exceptions to this are: (1) Landowners and tenants who live on the land they rent and who have their landlord's WRITTEN PERMISSION. (2) Virginia residents 65 years of age or older who hunt on private property in the county of their residence (A $5 permanent lifetime license is required to hunt statewide.)

What license you may need depends upon what, where and even how you hunt. A BASIC resident or non-resident license is required of all hunters and is valid for hunting all upland game. If you want to hunt deer, bear and turkey, an ADDITIONAL license is required. A National Forest permit (stamp) is needed to hunt on National Forest land, and a similar stamp is required to hunt the Piedmont State Forests. A special archery license is required to hunt during special seasons open for bowhunting only. Some western counties require a game damage stamp to hunt deer or bear within their respective boundaries. These are issued by the clerks of the court in counties where they are required. A federal migratory waterfowl stamp is required for ducks or geese and is available at local post offices. A blind license must be displayed on both stationary and floating blinds in, or on the shores, of public waters east of Interstate 95 EXCEPT in the Eastern Shore counties. Consult the Game Law Summary for particular information.

A license year is from July 1—June 30. Licenses may be obtained from the clerks of most courts and from authorized Department agents conveniently located throughout the state. Requirement clarification may be obtained from the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Box 11104, Richmond, Va. 23230-1104. Phone 804/257-1000.

Fees

Lifetime Resident license to hunt and fish. (does *not* include big game license or any other supplemental licenses.) $300.00

County Or City Resident to hunt in county or city of residence only $3.00

State Resident to hunt statewide $7.50

VA Nonresident To Hunt statewide $30.00

State Resident Deer, Bear, and Turkey license to hunt statewide required in addition to county or state hunting license $7.50

State Resident Archery License to hunt statewide $10.00

VA Nonresident Deer, Bear, and Turkey license to hunt statewide, required in addition to hunting license $30.00

VA Nonresident Archery License to hunt statewide $20.00

Special Stamp to hunt deer, bear in Alleghany, Bland, Botetourt, Craig, Floyd, Giles, Grayson, Highland, Patrick, Rockbridge, Russell, Smyth, Washington, and Wythe counties, in addition to other licenses, and sold only by the clerks of court of those counties (holders of lifetime licenses exempted.) $1.00

VA Nonresident Special Stamp in Giles and Russell counties ... $1.00

VA Nonresident Special Stamp in Alleghany, Bland, Botetourt, Craig, Floyd, Grayson, Highland, Patrick, Rockbridge, Smyth, Washington and Wythe counties $5.00

Lifetime Hunting And Fishing license for residents **65 years of age** and over available from the Department's Richmond office only $5.00

County Or City Resident to trap in county or city of residence only $7.50

State Resident to trap statewide $25.00

National Forest Permit (stamp) to hunt, fish or trap on national forests, required in addition to hunting licenses (holders of lifetime licenses exempted) $2.00

Permit To Hunt Or Trap On Appomattox, Buckingham, Cumberland, Gallion, Prince Edward And Pocahontas State Forest (sold by the Department of Forestry) may be obtained from Forest Headquarters or Clerk of Court in local counties $5.00

Federal Migratory Bird hunting stamp to take migratory waterfowl, required of persons 16 years of age and over in addition to hunting licenses and sold at U.S. Post Offices $10.00

VA Nonresident To Hunt On Shooting Preserves only obtainable in counties in which preserves are located $7.50

Hunting Laws

Hunter Education

Beginning July 1, 1988, all first-time hunters and anyone under 16 years old will have to demonstrate that they have successfully completed an approved hunter education course before they can buy a hunting license. Persons 16 or over will be exempted if they can show that a resident hunting license was issued to them in prior years. Approved courses include Virginia's 10-hour course and similar pro-

grams offered in the other 49 states and Canadian Provinces. It is important that currently licensed hunters save their old licenses until they buy their new ones. For information on hunter safety courses in your area, phone (804) 257-1000 or write to: Hunter Safety Courses, Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, P.O. Box 11104, Richmond, Va. 23230-1104.

Blaze Orange Required

An additional legislative change requires that, **beginning July 1, 1987, all hunters afield during the firearms deer season wear a blaze orange hat or blaze orange upper body clothing** visible from 360 degrees or display at least 100 square inches within body reach visible from all angles. Exempted are the muzzle-loading deer seasons and persons hunting waterfowl (1) from stationary or floating blinds, (2) over decoys, (3) in marshes and swamps, or (4) from a boat or other floating conveyance. Also exempted are persons participating in hunting dog field trials under Game Department permit. The body reach provision allows hunters to use the blaze orange sash which is fastened around a tree when the hunter is on stand. Blaze orange camouflage clothing does not qualify under current interpretation.

Steel Shot Zones

Effective with the 1987–88 waterfowl hunting season, steel shot will be required in Charles City, Gloucester, James City, New Kent and York counties, and in the cities of Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Suffolk and Virginia Beach. Additional counties will be phased into the steel shot only zones next year and each year thereafter through 1990. Effective with the 1991–92 waterfowl hunting season, steel shot will be required statewide for waterfowl hunting.

Hunting Seasons

Hunting seasons and bag limits are set by the Game Department on a two year basis as changes in game habitat conditions, game populations, hunting pressure, and other factors dictate. A few specific laws have been enacted by the General Assembly, and are changed infrequently. In some cases, counties have been delegated authority to adopt local ordinances relating to use of rifles and shotgun slugs, firearms safety zones, and hunting in public places (such as along roads). It is crucial to refer to the Game Laws Summary for these county differences.

The "Summary of Virginia Game Laws" is brought up to date and published each year around the first of August. It is distributed through license agents and sporting goods outlets throughout the state.

Where To Hunt

Finding good places to hunt in Virginia requires planning. Simply traveling the highways until you see unposted land is NOT the right way to go about it.

No privately owned land, posted or not, is open to hunting without first obtaining permission. Written permission is required on posted land and verbal permission in all other cases. Below is a description of the public hunting lands available in Virginia.

National Forests

The George Washington and Jefferson National Forests provide the largest amount of land open to the general public for hunting in Virginia. Most of the 1.5 million acres of National Forest land is open to public hunting and camping unless specifically designated closed. An annual $2 stamp is required to hunt or fish on the National Forests. The stamp can be purchased at most outlets that sell hunting licenses. Hunting regulations, seasons and bag limits conform with state and county regulations. Individual Ranger District maps may be obtained at any Forest Service office for $1 each. Information can be obtained from:

George Washington National Forest Headquarters, Harrison Plaza, Harrisonburg, VA 22801, phone 703/433-2491; Ranger District offices in Bridgewater, Buena Vista, Covington, Edinburg, Hot Springs and Staunton.

Jefferson National Forest Headquarters, Federal Building, 210 Franklin Road, SW, Roanoke, VA 24011 phone 703/982-6270; Ranger District offices in Blacksburg, Wise, Natural Bridge Station, Marion, New Castle and Wytheville.

Game Department Public Hunting Lands

The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries owns 175,797 acres of land in Virginia purchased with hunter license dollars and open to public hunting with a minimum of restrictions. With the exception of the daily blind permits on waterfowl areas at Back Bay and Hog Island, there is no charge for hunting on these areas.

Hunting season and bag limits on Department areas usually conform to those for the surrounding county. Most are open for the early archery seasons. Dove hunting is permitted during the regular open season on Wednesdays and Saturdays only.

Hunter access roads on Department lands normally open to motor vehicles will be open as indicated (weather permitting):

WEST OF BLUE RIDGE: 1st Saturday in October–January 30 and 1st Saturday in April to 2nd Saturday in May.

EAST OF BLUE RIDGE: 1st Saturday in October–February 29 and 1st Saturday in April to 2nd Saturday in May.

Foot Travel is invited on roads closed to motor vehicles.

Primitive camping (no developed facilities) is permitted, except as otherwise posted, on Department lands not to exceed a maximum of 7 days and in groups not to exceed 3 camping units. Camping is prohibited on or within 100 yards of any Department-owned or controlled boat ramp or fishing lake.

Amelia Wildlife Management Area — 2,217 acres in Amelia County.

Deer, squirrel, turkey, raccoon, quail, doves, and waterfowl. David N. Ellinghausen, WMA Supervisor, Route 4, Box 129F, Amelia, VA 23002.

Back Bay Hunting Areas — Pocahontas, 737 acres; Trojan, 406 acres. Fee hunting areas with blinds allocated by drawing. Information on blinds, fees, and drawings available from the Game Dept. after Labor Day. Area Manager: Otto Halstead, Box 7100, Virginia Beach, VA 23457.

Briery Creek Wildlife Management Area — 2,775 acres in Prince Edward County. Deer, turkey, quail, doves and waterfowl. Waterfowl hunting permitted during regular open season on Wednesdays and Saturdays and season opening date only. George N. Goin, WMA Supervisor, Route 2, Box 247, Cumberland, VA 23040.

C.F. Phelps Wildlife Management Area — 4,540 acres in Fauquier County. Deer, squirrel, rabbits, quail and turkey. Robert D. Henson, WMA Supervisor, Route 2, Box 105, Remington, VA 22734.

Chickahominy Wildlife Management Area — 5,111 acres in Charles City County. Deer, turkey, squirrel, rabbits, quail, waterfowl and doves. Floating waterfowl blinds only. David Brime, WMA Supervisor, Route 1, Box 115, Charles City, VA 23030.

Clinch Mountain Wildlife Management Area — 25,477 acres in Smyth, Russell, Tazewell and Washington Counties. Grouse, rabbit, squirrel, deer, turkey, bear and raccoon. Jay Jefferys, WMA Supervisor, Route 2, Box 218, Saltville, VA 24370.

Elm Hill Wildlife Management Area — 1,372 acres in Mecklenburg County. Upland game and doves. Danny W. Johnson, WMA Supervisor, Route 2, Box 109-A, Clarksville, VA 23927.

Fairystone Farms Wildlife Management Area — 5,286 acres in Patrick and Henry Counties. Camping nearby at Fairystone State Park. Deer, raccoon, squirrel and turkey. Mark Frank, WMA Supervisor, Route 2, Box 540-A, Bassett, VA 24055.

G. Richard Thompson Wildlife Management Area — 4,160 acres in Fauquier County. Turkey, deer, grouse and squirrel. Irvin L. Kenyon, Jr., WMA Supervisor, Route 1, Sperryville, VA 22740.

Gathright Wildlife Management Area — 13,428 acres in Bath and Alleghany Counties. Waterfowl, bear, deer, grouse, raccoon, squirrel and turkey. Kenneth R. Sexton, WMA Supervisor, Bacova, VA 24412.

Goshen Wildlife Management Area — 16,128 acres in Rockbridge County. Bear, deer, grouse, raccoon, squirrel and turkey. H. Eugene Sours, WMA Supervisor, Box 32, Swoope, VA 24479.

Hardware River Wildlife Management Area — 880 acres in Fluvanna County. Deer, squirrel, quail, turkey, raccoon, doves and rabbits. Stanley H. Patterson, WMA Supervisor, 4712 Old Buckingham Rd., Powhatan, VA 23139.

Havens Wildlife Management Area — 7,158 acres in Roanoke County. Foot access only. Bear, deer, grouse, raccoon, squirrel and turkey. Dan Lovelace, WMA Supervisor, Route 1, Box 58, Buchanan, VA 24066.

Hidden Valley Wildlife Management Area — 6,400 acres in Washington County. Grouse, rabbit, squirrel, deer, turkey, bear and raccoon. Jay Jefferys, WMA Supervisor, Route 2, Box 218, Saltville, VA 24370.

Highland Wildlife Management Area — 13,978 acres in Highland County. Bear, deer, grouse, raccoon, squirrel and turkey. Rodger L. Propst, WMA Supervisor, Route E, Box 70, Monterey, VA 24465.

Hog Island Waterfowl Management Area — 3,908 acres in Surry County. Bowhunting for deer during early archery season. Managed waterfowl hunting. Fee hunting area. Advance fee reservation required. Information on fees and drawings available from the Game Department after Labor Day. Area Manager: Clyde Abernathy, RFD, Surry, VA 23883.

Horsepen Lake Wildlife Management Area — 2,688 acres (18 acre lake) in Buckingham County. Deer, turkey, squirrel and quail. Raymond S. Franklin, WMA Supervisor, Route 2, Box 626, Appomattox, VA 24522.

James River Wildlife Management Area — 671 acres in Nelson County. Deer, squirrel, rabbit, raccoon, turkey, quail, dove and waterfowl. Raymond S. Franklin, WMA Supervisor, Route 2, Box 626, Appomattox, VA 24522.

Little North Mountain Wildlife Management Area — 17,538 acres in Augusta and Rockbridge Counties. Bear, deer, grouse, raccoon, squirrel and turkey. H. Eugene Sours, WMA Supervisor, Box 32, Swoope, VA 24479.

Mockhorn Island Wildlife Management Area — 9,452 acres in Northampton County. Rail and limited waterfowl. Accessible by boat only. Granville Ross, WMA Supervisor, P.O. Box 212, Hallwood, VA 23359.

Pettigrew Wildlife Management Area — 934 acres in Caroline County. Deer, squirrel, rabbit and quail. David N. Ellinghausen, WMA Supervisor, Route 4, Box 126 F, Amelia, VA 23002.

Powhatan Wildlife Management Area — 4,171 acres in Powhatan County. Deer, squirrel, turkey, raccoon, rabbit, quail and dove. Stanley H. Patterson, WMA Supervisor, 4712 Old Buckingham Rd., Powhatan, VA 23139.

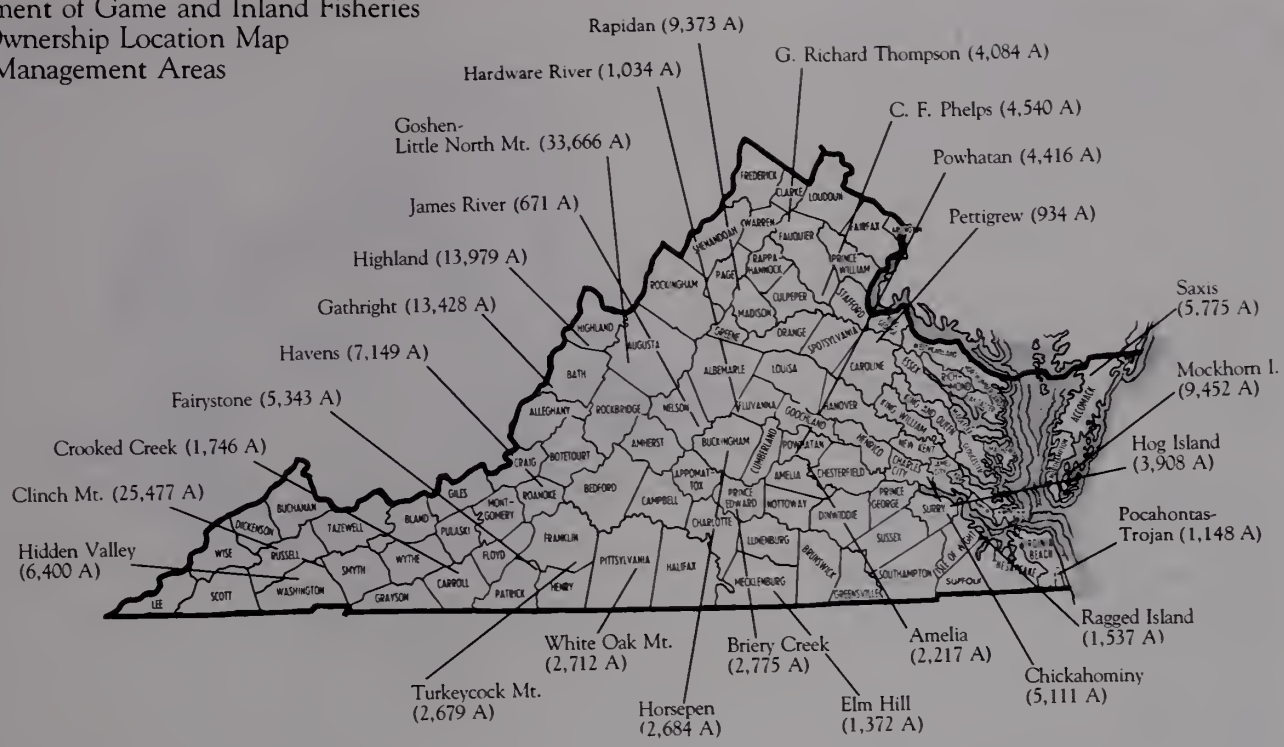
Ragged Island Wildlife Management Area — 1,537 acres in Isle of Wight County. Waterfowl and deer. Clyde Abernathy, WMA Supervisor, RFD, Surry, VA 23883.

Rapidan Wildlife Management Area — 9,373 acres in Madison and Green Counties. Bear, deer, grouse, squirrel and turkey. Irvin L. Kenyon, Jr., WMA Supervisor, Route 1, Sperryville, VA 22740.

Saxis Wildlife Management Area — 5,775 acres in Accomack County. Rail, waterfowl and deer. Granville Ross, WMA Supervisor, P.O. Box 212, Hallwood, VA 23359.

Turkeycock Mountain Management Area — 1,789 acres in Franklin County. Deer, turkey and squirrel. Mark Frank, WMA Supervisor, Route 2, Box 540-A, Bassett, VA 24055.

Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
Land Ownership Location Map
Major Management Areas



White Oak Mountain Wildlife Management Area — 2,711 acres in Pittsylvania County. Deer, quail, rabbit, squirrel, raccoon, and dove. Jessie B. Robertson, Jr., WMA Supervisor, Route 1, Box 76-G, Chatham, VA 24531.

Waterfowl Blind Drawing On Management Areas

A public drawing for waterfowl blinds is held annually to hunt at Pocahontas, Barbours Hill and Hog Island Wildlife Management Areas. Applications are available from the Game Department Richmond office after Labor Day.

General Rules And Procedures For Pocahontas, Barbours Hill, & Hog Island Areas

Before any persons may hunt on these areas, they must first apply for shooting dates and be awarded same by an authorized representative of the Department of Game & Inland Fisheries. All hunters must check in and out of the respective area headquarters. Only properly completed applications, including a current year Virginia hunting license number (exactly as printed), received in the Richmond office prior to 5 pm on **October 10, 1987** will be entered in the public drawing. **Only one (1) application per person will be accepted for each area.** If duplicate license numbers are submitted for an area, **both applications will be voided.** Checks and money orders must be made payable to the Treasurer of Virginia in the correct amount for each area. A separate check must accompany each application. No cash. After the public drawing, reservations must be obtained in person or by mail ONLY from the appropriate Area Manager.

Pocahontas Area & Barbours Hill Area — $15 fee. Otto Halstead, Area Manager, Box 7100, Virginia Beach, VA 23457.

Hog Island Area — $15 fee. Clyde Abernathy, Area Manager, RFD, Surry, VA 23883.

General Rules And Procedures For Trojan Area (Not In Drawing)

There is no public drawing for permits on this area. Permits are issued daily on a first come-first served basis. Priority for Trojan blinds will be given to persons holding Pocahontas permits in the event of unsafe boating conditions on Back Bay. Rental fee is $5 per day for use of a Department-owned blind. Dogs are permitted. The area will be closed to hunting at 2 pm daily. Trojan Headquarters is located at the end of Back Bay Landing Rd. off Rt. 615 in Virginia Beach. Area Manager: Otto Halstead, Box 7100, Virginia Beach, VA 23457.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

- 4,750 acres in Patrick, Henry, and Franklin Counties surrounding Philpott Lake. No permit required. State and/or county license or stamps only. Map available from Resource Manager, Route 6, Box 140, Bassett, VA 24055.

- 38,000 acres in Mecklenburg, Halifax and Charlotte Counties surrounding John H. Kerr Reservoir. No special permit required. Nineteen developed Wildlife Management Areas. Map and Management Area Guide available from Reservoir Manager, Route 1, Box 76, Boydton, VA 23917.
- 3,261 acres in Dickenson County surrounding John W. Flannagan Dam and Reservoir. No permit required. For additional information contact Resource Manager, Route 1, Box 268, Haysi, VA 24256-9736; phone 703/835-9544.
- 2,722 acres in Wise County surrounding North Fork of Pound River Lake. No permit required. For additional information contact Resource Manager, Route 1, Box 369, Pound, VA 25279-9769; phone 703/796-5775.

State Parks

When traveling through State Park areas not designated for hunting, guns MUST be unloaded AND cased.

Fairystone State Park — Route 2, Box 134, Stuart, VA 24171. 2,400 acres in Patrick and Henry Counties only. No permit required. Remainder of park closed except for camping and other park activities. No maps.

Sailor's Creek Battlefield State Park — 240 acres in Amelia and Prince Edward Counties. Special designated areas for hunting are marked. For information, contact Twin Lakes State Park, Route 2, Box 70, Greenbay, VA 23942. No permit required. No maps.

Grayson-Highland State Park — Route 2, Box 141, Mouth of Wilson, VA 24363. 1,200 acres in Grayson County. No permit required. Maps available, phone 804/786-1712.

False Cape State Park — 3,421 acres in Virginia Beach. Limited waterfowl hunting by permit on Barbours Hill area. Limited deer and feral hog hunting confined to a two-week period beginning October 29, 1987 thru November 7, 1987. Contact Game Department Area Manager, Otto Halstead, Box 7100, Virginia Beach, VA 23457.

Occoneechee State Park — Box 818, Clarksville, VA 23927. 2,100 acres in Mecklenburg County on Buggs Island Lake. No permit required. Maps available, phone 804/786-1712.

While not designated for hunting, there are also six State Parks offering primitive camping to hunters of adjacent areas. For information, phone 804/786-1712.

Industrial Lands

Appalachian Power Cooperative Management Areas — 6,000 acres surrounding Smith Mountain Lake in Bedford and Pittsylvania Counties. No permit required. No maps available. For information, contact Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Route 1, Box 76-G, Chatham, VA 24531.

Union Camp Corporation Cooperative Management Areas — Union Camp Corp., P.O. Box 178, Franklin, VA 23851. 16,000 acres in Brunswick County near Lawrenceville south of Route 58, in several tracts. No permit required. Map available.

Westvaco Cooperative Management Area — Westvaco, Timberlands Division, P.O. Box WV, Appomattox, VA 24522. Phone 804/352-7132. 900 acres in Amherst County. No permit required. Maps no longer available.

Forest Industry Lands

An annual permit is required by each of these companies. Fees vary. A state license is required in addition to timber permit.

Bear Island Timberlands Company, P.O. Box 1627, Hopewell, VA 23860. Approximately 45,000 acres available for permit hunting in the counties of Albemarle, Appomattox, Buckingham, Campbell, Caroline, Charlotte, Essex, Fluvanna, Goochland, Halifax, Hanover, King and Queen, King William, Louisa, Lunenburg, Middlesex, Nelson, Orange, Pittsylvania, Spotsylvania and Stafford. Permits are valid on any company properties which are NOT red posted or leased to private hunt clubs. Bear Island's permits are sold by Continental Forest Investments, Inc.

They may be obtained in person at Continental's office on Route 10 one mile east of Interstate 95 (Exit 6E) in Chesterfield County, VA, or by mailing a request with a self-addressed stamped envelope. Permits are $10 each; $5 disabled and senior citizens with proof of age or disability required. Individual county maps showing property locations are available for $1 per map. Specify county or counties desired. Mail requests for maps must be accompanied by a 10" × 13" self-addressed envelope with 39¢ postage. Permits are valid from Sept. 1987 through 1988 spring gobbler season. Permits go on sale in August. No permits are issued at the office in Ashland, VA. For more information, phone 804/748-9659.

Champion International Corporation, Forest Lands Manager, P.O. Box 309, Roanoke Rapids, NC 27870. Some acreage is leased for exclusive use and is so posted. About 34,000 acres in Southside counties, including Brunswick, Halifax, and Lunenburg Counties, is open for permit hunting. Individual county permits are $3 and statewide permits are $7. County maps showing permit hunting lands are available for $1 each if the request is accompanied by a 10" × 13" or larger self-addressed envelope with postage for 3 ounces.

Chesapeake Corporation — Public hunting permits sold at four Woodland Area offices during normal business hours or by mail. All mail requests must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope and a copy of 1987 state hunting license. Blanket requests for maps will not be honored. Permits will not be issued to persons under the age of seven. Permits are valid for hunting only. Permits are $8. The Woodland Area offices are:

Tidewater Area — approximately 50,000 acres located in Charles City, New Kent, King William, King and Queen, James City, Middlesex, Prince George, Gloucester and Matthews Counties (VA). Chesapeake Corp., Hunting Permits, Box 311, West Point, VA 23181.

Eastern Shore Area — approximately 10,000 acres located in Accomack, Northumberland (VA), Dorchester, Caroline, Wicomico, Worcester, Somerset (MD), and Sussex (DE). Chesapeake Corp., Hunting Permits, Box 300, Pocomoke City, MD 21851.

Central Piedmont Area — approximately 45,000 acres located in Amelia, Appomattox, Buckingham, Charlotte, Chesterfield, Cumberland, Fluvanna, Goochland, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway, Powhatan and Prince Edward Counties (VA). Chesapeake Corp., Hunting Permits, Box 450, Keysville, VA 23947.

Northern Piedmont and Northern Neck Area — approximately 25,000 acres in Caroline, Essex, Hanover, Louisa, Orange, Spotsylvania, Stafford, King George, Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond and Westmoreland Counties (VA). Chesapeake Corp., Hunting Permits, Box 942, Warsaw, VA 22572.

Continental Forest Investments, Inc., P.O. Box 1041, Hopewell, VA 23860-1041. Approximately 200,000 acres available for permit hunting in the counties of Amelia, Amherst, Appomattox, Brunswick, Buckingham, Campbell, Charles City, Charlotte, Chesterfield, Cumberland, Dinwiddie, Greensville, Halifax, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nelson, New Kent, Nottoway, Powhatan, Prince Edward, Prince George, Southampton, Surry and Sussex. Permits are valid on any company properties which are NOT red posted or leased to private hunt clubs. Permits may be obtained in person at Continental's office on Route 10 one mile east of Interstate 95 (Exit 6E) in Chesterfield County, VA, or by mailing a request with a self-addressed 10" × 13" or larger envelope with 39¢ postage. Permits are valid from Sept. 1987 through 1988 spring gobbler season. Permits go on sale in August. For more information, phone 804/748-9659.

Flippo Lumber Corporation, P.O. Box 38, Doswell, VA 23047. Approximately 11,000 acres located in Hanover, Caroline, King William, King and Queen and Louisa Counties. Each individual desiring a permit must go to the office in person and present a valid VA's hunter's license. Office hours are 7:30 am–5:00 pm, Monday–Friday. Permits are valid from Oct. 1 through May 15 only; lands are closed to hunters at other times. Property maps are available at no charge to those applicants requesting a map. Permits are $7.

Glatfelter Pulp Wood Company, H.W. Sheffer, District Manager, Box 868, Fredericksburg, VA 22404. Phone 703/373-9431. Counties with one or more tracts open for hunting include Fauquier, Culpeper, Orange, Spotsylvania, Louisa, Hanover, Fluvanna, Buckingham, Cumberland, Halifax, Nottoway, Appomattox, Lunenburg, King George and Caroline. Total about 25,000 acres. Some acreage leased for exclusive use and so posted; all other unposted properties open to permit holders. Permits cost $10 and require state hunting license information. Special regulations are printed on back of permit. Maps are available upon request. All requests must be accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Lester Properties, Kenneth O. Scruggs, Forestlands Department Manager, Post Office Drawer 4991, Martinsville, VA 24115. Phone 703/632-2195 ext. 250. Tracts are available for lease at a minimum $1.50 an acre or property taxes, whichever is greater. Some public hunting is available. There are 20,000 acres in the counties of Franklin, Halifax, Henry and Pittsylvania. Maps are available at no charge.

Westvaco, Timberlands Division, P.O. Box WV, Appomattox, VA 24522. Phone 804/352-7132. More than 170,000 acres open in 21 counties, including Appomattox, Botetourt, Buckingham, Louisa and Pittsylvania. Some tracts leased exclu-

sively to hunt clubs. Combination hunting and fishing permits for $8, upon request and accompanied by self-addressed, stamped envelope plus current hunting and fishing license number. Maps are no longer available.

Cooperative Public Hunting Areas

The Department Of Game and Inland Fisheries is responsible for wildlife management on some 250,000 acres of land it does not own in return for hunting privileges and benefits to sportsmen.

Piedmont State Forests

These are owned by the Virginia Department of Forestry. CUMBERLAND STATE FOREST, 16,768 acres in western Cumberland County north of U.S. 60. APPOMATTOX-BUCKINGHAM STATE FOREST, 19,705 acres south of Route 24 in Appomattox and Buckingham Counties. PRINCE EDWARD-GALLION STATE FOREST, 6,963 acres in eastern Prince Edward County north of Route 360. POCAHONTAS STATE FOREST, 5,648 acres south of Richmond in Chesterfield County. A portion of this area which adjoins the state park is closed for hunting.

All of the above are open to holders of a $5.00 State Forest Stamp available from agents located near the properties. To purchase a stamp by mail, the individual's name, state license number, and a self-addressed stamped envelope is required. Maps are available from each of the State Forest offices or from the Department of Forestry in Charlottesville.

The season for some animals may be different on the State Forest than in the county in which they are located. These are specified in the Game Laws Summary produced by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. In addition, there are safety zones established on each forest around the offices and houses where no hunting is allowed.

For information: contact James E. Bowen, Superintendent of State Forests. Phone 804/492-4121. Write for maps & stamp info to: Virginia Department of Forestry, P.O. Box 3758, University Station, Charlottesville, Virginia 22903.

Military Areas

Marine Corps Development and Education Command (MCDEC) Quantico

50,000 acres in Fauquier, Prince William and Stafford Counties. A minimum of 15% of the available hunting spaces each day are reserved for off-post civilian hunters. All must purchase $8.00 annual MCDEC hunting permit after attending mandatory hunting orientation/safety lecture which is given at the base game checking station. Lectures are given at 5:30 am and 8:00 am from October 1–January 5 and during spring gobbler season. Daily hunting quotas vary depending upon military commitments. Shotgun slugs are required for deer hunting. Deer may not be hunted with dogs or by driving. Certain areas allow muzzleloaders. Call (703) 640-5523/5218.

Fort A.P. Hill Military Reservation

76,000 acres in Caroline County. Fee permits issued on a first come-first served basis from hunting section office. Shotgun and bow and arrow are only weapons permitted. Dogs may

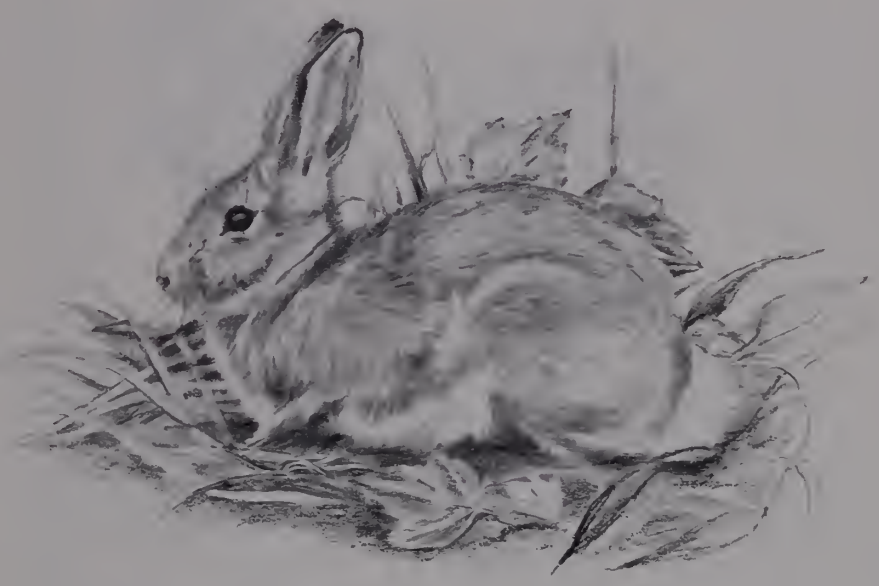
not be used to hunt deer. Dove hunting on Wednesdays and Saturdays only during the regular dove season. Maps available. Write to: Community Recreation Division, attn: Hunt Check Station, Fort A.P. Hill, Bowling Green, Virginia 22427. Phone 804/633-8300 or 633-8219. A state license is required and a $10.00 permit.

Radford Army Ammunition Plant

2,800 acres in Pulaski County. Deer is the only legal game that can be hunted. Hunters are selected from Game Department applications received before September of each year. Applications are available beginning July 1st of each year. A total of 250 hunters are selected for 5 archery hunts and 120 selected for 4 shotgun hunts. All hunting is restricted to Saturdays and holidays (Thanksgiving). All hunting is restricted to the available stands. Applicants selected to hunt are not eligible to apply to hunt the following year. Application fee is $2.50 and the hunt permit is $7.50. All other appropriate licenses are required (big game, archery, state license). For further information contact, Commander RAAP, Attn: Deer Hunt Coordinator, Radford, Va. 24141. Phone:703/639-8719. Other contact: VA Department of Game, Rt. 1, Box 107, Marion, Va. 24354. Phone: 703/783-4860.

Fort Pickett Military Reservation

45,198 acres in Nottoway, Brunswick and Dinwiddie Counties. Hunting normally permitted Monday through Saturday except Christmas and New Year's Day. Daily hunting quotas are based on troop training activities. Geographical areas on Fort Pickett may be closed at any time due to military training mission of the installation. **Only** shotguns (no slugs) and bow and arrow are allowed for hunting. Dogs may be used to hunt both big and small game. Dove hunting is permitted on Wednesdays and Saturdays (afternoon only). Hunters **must** wear blaze orange (minimum of 500 square inches above the waist) during the general hunting season. In addition to a state hunting license, a Fort Pickett permit is required. The permit fee is $7.50. Hunting information and map may be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to: HQ, US Army Garrison, ATTN: Game Check Station, Fort Pickett, Blackstone, VA 23824. For additional information/inquiries, phone 804/292-2618.



P.H.O.N.E. (Poachers Hurt Our Natural Environment) Program

The Department of Game & Inland Fisheries established a violation reporting program on October 1, 1986.

A toll-free number (1-800-237-5712) is available to the citizens of Virginia 24 hours a day, 7 days a week including holidays, to report game, fish or boating law violations. The P.H.O.N.E. Line is staffed 8 am–5 pm daily. An answering system will record call-back requests after hours.

A reward fund has been established by The Virginia Sportsmen Reward Fund, Inc. and is offered for information leading to an arrest. Callers may remain anonymous and are not required to testify in court.

Maps

A good map is essential for a successful hunting experience. Topographic maps are available from the following sources:

VIRGINIA REPRODUCTION & SUPPLY COMPANY, 9 W. Cary St., Richmond, VA 23220. 804/643-9116.

VIRGINIA DIVISION OF MINERAL RESOURCES, Box 3667, Charlottesville VA 22903. 804/293-5121.

NATIONAL CARTOGRAPHIC INFORMATION CENTER (NCIC), 507 National Center, Reston, VA 22092. 703/860-6045.

Contact each firm individually for procedures and fee information.

Hunter Education Training

Hunter education courses will be required of all new hunters and those under 16 years of age beginning July 1, 1988. In gearing up for this program, the Game Department has hired six new training sergeants across the state. Each sergeant will be located in one of the six districts across the state, and will be in charge of coordinating hunter education courses in their area. If you are interested in signing up for a course, (and the earlier you take a course, the better), contact your district listed below or the Richmond office at 804/257-1000.

District I
Lt. Garland R. Foster
Sgt. Rex Hill
Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries
4010 West Broad St.
Richmond, VA 23230-1104
(804) 257-1000

District II
Lt. John Heslep
Sgt. Michael Ashworth
Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries
209 East Cleveland Avenue
Vinton, VA 24179
(703) 983-7704

District III
Lt. Donald Wirt
Sgt. Harry Street
Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries
Route 1, Box 107
Marion, VA 24179
(703) 783-4860

District IV
Lt. Lee Haupt
Sgt. Jess Sager
Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries
Route 6, Box 484-A
Staunton, VA 24401
(703) 332-9210

District V
Lt. Michael Clark
Sgt. Randy Grauer
Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries
819 Warrenton Road
Fredericksburg, VA 22405
(703) 899-4169

District VI
Lt. Donald Hinchey
Sgt. Diane Thompson
Dept. of Game and Inland Fisheries
500 Hinton Avenue
Chesapeake, VA 23323
(804) 446-4868

Black Bear Hunters Alert

Black Bear Teeth Needed

Answers to some questions biologists must ask are often impossible or at least difficult to obtain. The professional staff of the Game Division must make season recommendations to the 10-member Board every other year and must attempt to answer a myriad of these questions involving data and statistical interpretations with a healthy mix of public input and wildlife management principles. The biologist often needs the help of the hunter in answering these questions.

Black bear data is particularly difficult to obtain. Males are difficult to distinguish from females. Both are in relatively low numbers and are quite shy by nature. Aging and identifying the sex of wildlife species is a fundamental tool in managing practically all game animals, but aging black bear can come only by removing a small tooth behind the large canine tooth in the upper jaw. This tooth is decalcified, cut longitudinally, stained and put on microscopic slides. The annual deposit of enamel cells can be counted, much like the rings of a tree stump, to give the age of the bear — a fine technique for both living and harvested animals.

These bear teeth have been requested of hunters since 1972 to help give biologists a better picture of the

age structure, reproductive success, sex ratios and harvest distribution of black bear in Virginia. We encourage hunters to supply us with this valuable information, and in appreciation for their help, we have designed an arm patch, which will be awarded to each hunter supplying the tooth and some fundamental data about the kill.

Envelopes, specially designed with instructions and illustrations, are presented at check stations in counties with a bear season. You can also obtain one by contacting your local game warden, or writing to Dennis Martin, c/o Virginia Game Department, Route 6, Box 484-A, Staunton, Virginia 24401.

Remember, your support in this program is vital. Other than our limited trapping and collection of road or illegally killed bears, we have no other access to the kind of information we need to determine the health of the bear population in the state. The kind of information that you, the bear hunter can provide, is *essential* to the future of bears in Virginia.

Pass Up Females

Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries biologists are now installing a new ear tag in the ears of female black bears. The orange tag will give hunters the option of not harvesting a female bear when seen in the woods or at bay with hounds. There are, however, many females that have been tagged prior to this past summer that are wearing conventional metal ear tags only. In addition, hunters near the Shenandoah National Park may see ear tags with other colors. These should not be confused with the orange tags.

Although this project has been considered for several years, requests by interested bear hunting groups has encouraged its implementation. We are eager to hear from hunters about this and other projects designed to improve the quality of hunting in Virginia. For more information, contact Dennis Martin, Virginia Game Department, Rt. 6, Box 484-A, Staunton, VA 24401 or call 703/885-9030.

Statewide Deer, Bear, and Fall Turkey Harvest

	1984 — 1985			1985 — 1986			1986 — 1987		
County	Deer	Bear	Turkey	Deer	Bear	Turkey	Deer	Bear	Turkey
Accomack	316	0	8	525	0	0	776	0	0
Albemarle	1,212	32	171	1,703	15	214	1,808	61	261
Alleghany	1,364	20	226	1,856	15	265	2,210	9	514
Amelia	1,862	0	193	1,729	0	164	1 389	0	201
Amherst	921	14	189	996	13	213	1,390	15	274
Appomattox	506	0	152	558	0	183	697	0	187
Augusta	2,336	48	221	2,852	47	201	4,140	25	324
Bath	2,843	11	362	3,725	16	400	4,286	8	506
Bedford	1,911	16	275	2,197	21	309	2,913	22	359
Bland	1,144	5	222	1,279	9	190	1,826	3	290
Botetourt	1,629	28	263	1,638	31	233	2,698	32	405
Brunswick	1,463	0	148	1,649	0	195	1,505	0	190
Buchanan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Buckingham	1,530	0	267	1,640	0	257	1,773	0	331
Campbell	323	0	99	335	0	134	497	0	153
Caroline	1,302	0	231	1,745	0	291	1,751	0	332
Carroll	413	0	149	524	0	183	777	0	290
Charles City	1,079	0	5	1,572	0	14	1,342	0	31
Charlotte	689	0	146	967	0	125	892	0	164
Chesapeake	302	6	0	258	5	0	356	8	0
Chesterfield	1,155	0	31	945	0	50	833	0	45
Clarke	427	0	25	456	0	36	744	0	36
Craig	1,529	12	168	1,739	13	183	2,911	16	324
Culpeper	557	0	70	779	0	105	886	0	129
Cumberland	1,199	0	174	1,348	0	153	1,447	0	208
Dickenson	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dinwiddie	1,082	0	168	1,340	0	163	1,129	0	164
Essex	254	0	45	213	0	45	300	0	50
Fairfax	96	0	0	148	0	2	150	0	1
Fauquier	1,543	0	80	1,801	0	68	1,962	0	115
Floyd	413	0	53	545	0	83	745	0	179
Fluvanna	804	0	150	807	0	162	957	0	185
Franklin	921	0	145	1,025	0	145	1,251	0	252
Frederick	1,232	0	102	1,450	0	147	2,371	0	327
Giles	1,494	16	301	1,784	12	198	2,220	19	309
Gloucester	218	0	0	281	0	0	310	0	0
Goochland	744	0	118	803	0	121	880	0	158
Grayson	2,388	0	163	2,884	1	184	3,379	0	227
Greene	106	9	32	195	11	24	168	23	30
Greensville	721	0	10	1,245	0	7	1,249	0	9
Halifax	930	0	199	1,198	0	245	1,142	0	213
Hampton-Newport News (city)	288	0	0	126	0	0	266	0	0
Hanover	330	0	64	454	0	79	432	0	154
Henrico	406	0	18	499	0	9	471	0	19
Henry	346	0	19	397	0	37	601	0	52
Highland	1,919	8	195	2,617	11	195	3,389	12	230
Isle of Wight	1,216	0	0	1,383	1	0	1,545	0	0
James City	338	0	0	431	0	0	520	0	0
King & Queen	602	0	111	855	0	108	831	0	115
King George	587	0	0	664	0	0	711	0	0
King William	632	0	107	650	0	117	810	0	161
Lancaster	311	0	0	428	0	0	463	0	0
Lee	160	0	20	217	0	28	224	0	33
Loudoun	1,688	0	57	2,137	0	43	2,607	0	68
Louisa	644	0	123	933	0	159	965	0	188
Lunenburg	675	0	69	856	0	86	777	0	88
Madison	258	31	13	287	25	28	396	53	53
Mathews	61	0	0	96	0	0	119	0	0
Mecklenburg	636	0	4	636	0	17	625	0	6
Middlesex	83	0	10	91	0	6	124	0	8
Montgomery	777	10	127	816	10	91	1,085	16	159
Nelson	690	39	122	670	30	115	880	44	188
New Kent	690	0	20	1,490	0	36	1,411	0	30
Northampton	182	0	0	321	0	0	423	0	0
Northumberland	301	0	0	384	0	0	450	0	0
Nottoway	951	0	75	1,199	0	96	1,071	0	79
Orange	354	0	35	536	0	53	577	0	71
Page	503	28	50	616	29	57	1,086	25	86
Patrick	542	0	38	573	0	37	716	0	95
Pittsylvania	1,634	0	138	1,838	0	189	2,259	0	230
Powhatan	1,270	0	111	1,387	0	97	1,463	0	140
Prince Edward	984	0	155	1,296	0	145	1,357	0	233
Prince George	916	0	60	1,017	0	52	1,261	0	57
Prince William	559	0	49	474	0	23	791	0	44
Pulaski	589	0	112	715	1	90	1,039	0	204
Rappahannock	1,173	20	81	1,050	13	42	1,347	18	70
Richmond	394	0	0	459	0	0	548	0	0
Roanoke	238	0	21	218	0	17	338	0	47
Rockbridge	1,619	25	329	1,735	46	244	2,652	35	324
Rockingham	2,522	45	100	3,287	58	138	5,251	48	253
Russell	86	1	16	99	2	25	125	4	6
Scott	231	0	26	286	0	56	364	0	46
Shenandoah	2,085	11	119	2,556	11	151	3,729	16	317
Smyth	879	1	133	1081	2	122	1,144	1	162
Southampton	3,655	0	0	3,932	0	0	4,185	0	0
Spotsylvania	422	0	73	647	0	88	510	0	74
Stafford	401	0	48	537	0	36	627	0	64
Suffolk	1,107	8	0	1,237	13	0	1,429	2	0
Surry	1,209	0	0	1,947	0	0	1,897	0	0
Sussex	1,523	0	50	2,291	0	41	2,376	0	44
Tazewell	239	3	55	242	5	50	325	6	78
Virginia Beach	200	0	0	205	0	0	400	0	0
Warren	879	16	74	926	5	38	1,194	13	111
Washington	252	0	35	339	0	44	440	3	42
Westmoreland	333	0	0	442	0	0	465	0	0
Wise	118	0	32	149	0	46	168	0	35
Wythe	1,037	3	149	1,283	3	199	1,780	2	183
York	700	0	9	641	0	3	661	0	6
Totals	84,382	467	8,613	101,412	474	9,025	121,760	539	12,426

Hunting Season Outlook 1987-88

by Bob Duncan, Assistant Chief Game Division

1986-87 Deer Season Summary

Virginia deer hunters experienced the best season ever by harvesting a record 121,801 whitetails during the 1986-87 season!

Harvest data indicates that this past year's deer harvest surpassed the 1985-86 season total by 20,376. The biggest surprise was that 72 percent of the statewide increase resulted from the western deer kill! Counties west of the Blue Ridge Mountains produced an increase of 14,767 over the previous year's tally of 37,914. This jump in the western kill represents an increase of 39 percent over the preceding year's and is more than twice the 10-year average for that area of the state. The harvest, east of the Blue Ridge was 69,120 deer, which was up 5,609 animals over previous season's take.

Bowhunters did their share to contribute to the new record by tagging 7,974 deer. The bow kill was up 2,911 deer over the 1985-86 season. The archery harvest still only accounted for 6½ percent of the statewide deer take. Two-thirds of the total bow kills were made by hunters in the western part of the state. Top counties for bowhunting were: Rockingham (846), Grayson (392), Augusta (355), Bath (310), Highland (290), Bedford (277), both Craig and Shenandoah (276), Giles (275), Wythe (275) and Botetourt (207). Bowhunters also managed to harvest 92 wild turkeys and 56 black bear.

Blackpowder shooters tallied 965 deer west of the Blue Ridge and 117 east for a total of 1,082 deer. This was an increase of 231 "buckskins" over last year. However, the muzzleloader kill remains below 1 percent of the total deer harvest.

The top 10 counties for gun and bow combined are: Rockingham, Bath, Southampton, Augusta, Shenandoah, Highland, Grayson, Bedford, Craig and Botetourt. Eight of these top ten are repeat counties from the previous year's list.

1987-88 Deer Season Forecast

Several major regulation changes will influence the outcome of what is expected to be another excellent year of white-tailed deer hunting in the Old Dominion. The use of the antlerless deer only tag will be restricted to designated either-sex deer hunting days and *not* full season as was the case in some eastern counties last season. The traditional closing date for deer season has been changed to the first Saturday in January, so that the last day of the season falls on a Saturday, a traditional hunting day for sportsmen. And, blackpowder shooters will have a total of three either-sex deer hunting days instead of only one day as in the past several seasons.

Increased deer harvest is expected in the Northern Neck counties of King George, Westmoreland, Richmond, Lancaster and Northumberland, which have been added to the counties with a three deer per license year bag limit. Rappahannock County will also have the three deer limit for the first time, and Halifax, Prince George, Pittsylvania (east of the Southern Railroad), and Powhatan will have six "doe days" instead of three as in the past. Fairystone Wildlife Management Area, Fairystone State Park and Philpott Reservoir will have *either-sex deer hunting on the last day only* as opposed to the *bucks only* hunting seasons of last year, to permit an increased harvest.

Several eastern Piedmont counties were given reduced numbers of either-sex deer hunting days to provide for increases in deer herds. Hanover, Henrico, Louisa and Spotsylvania have been changed from *six to three either-sex* deer hunting days. Chesterfield County was given *one either-sex deer hunting day.* Other deer season changes include a reduction of either-sex deer hunting days on four state-owned wildlife management areas: Powhatan, G. Richard Thompson, and White Oak Mountain W.M.A.'s will *drop from six "doe days" to three* to provide for herd increases. The C.F. Phelps W.M.A. will offer either-sex deer hunting on the *last day only* this year.

Poor mast crops in the western portion of the state will mean smaller antlers this season. Southwest Regional Biologist Mack Walls from Marion expects a good season, but advises that a slight decline in deer harvest may occur. Northwest Regional Biologist Gary Spiers and District Biologist Rod McClanahan in the Northern Virginia both agree with Walls' assessment for the west. Fax Settle, Regional Supervisor from Tappahannock, expects a good deer season north of the James River, but District Biologist Don Schwab predicts some reduction in kill in his southeastern Virginia district. Regional Biologist Jim Bowman stationed in Buckingham looks for the deer kill in his 26 county region to equal or surpass last year. District Biologist Hal Myers from Amherst concurs with Bowman for the western Piedmont counties in expecting a good harvest.

Promising areas for trophy bucks include: Shenandoah, Warren, Page, Surry, Bedford, Pulaski, Madison, Botetourt, and Rockbridge counties.

Black Bear

The black bear harvest in the Old Dominion increased for the fourth straight season with a total kill of 539. Research Biologist Dennis Martin predicts that the bear kill this season will likely exceed 450. Given the number of bear observations and complaints this spring, good mast conditions and favorable weather, Virginia bear hunters should experience another excellent season. Top counties for bear in 1986 were: Albemarle, Madison, Rockingham, Nelson, Rockbridge, Botetourt, Augusta, Page, Greene and Bedford.

The only regulation change for bear will be to allow bear hunting in Roanoke County during the general bear season of November 23-January 2.

Fall Turkey Season

Last year's fall turkey kill totaled 12,479 birds, the second best ever recorded. The total exceeded the 1985-86 fall season total by 38 percent and almost two-thirds of that increase was provided by counties west of the Blue Ridge. The statewide fall harvest is averaging one turkey for every two square miles of forested range.

An increase in the license year bag limit from two to three, a slight increase

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Sportsman's Calendar

1987-88 Calendar Order Form

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Virginia Game Commission
P.O. Box 11104
Richmond, VA 23230-1104

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the length of the fall season and changes in turkey season regulations for nine counties should result in another excellent season of turkey hunting. The bag limit change will permit the taking of up to two birds in any one season (fall *or* spring) while *not* exceeding a total of three turkeys per license year. The statewide fall turkey season will run from November 2 through *January 2* instead of the December 31 closing date of past fall seasons. Also, the Northern Neck counties of King George, Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond and Westmoreland will be opened for a two week fall season this year. In southwest Virginia, the counties of Lee, Scott, Russell and Wise will have a full length fall season as opposed to a two week season.

Spring Turkey Season

The 1988 spring gobbler season has been set for April 9 through May 14. These dates represent the second Saturday in April through the second Saturday in May. The calendar provides an *extra week* of spring gobbler hunting as a result, with a total of *five weeks* and *six Saturdays* in 1988 compared to the usual four weeks and five Saturdays. This should help western turkey hunters who often start the season with extremely cold weather and poor hunting conditions. The 1987 record gobbler kill of 5,835 represented a slight increase over the 1986 spring kill.

Bobwhite Quail

Irvin Kenyon, Wildlife Management Area Supervisor reports that the average number of quail taken during the 1986-87 season remained virtually unchanged from the previous season. There were regional differences in hunter success, with northern Virginia showing the greatest improvement, followed by a slight improvement in Tidewater. Hunter success in the majority of the Piedmont this past season was down from the preceding year. Quail hunting remained essentially the same in the Central Mountains region, and hunters in the southwest reported a few more birds.

While the number of breeding birds should be comparable to that of 1986, Kenyon predicts that hot and dry conditions will duplicate last year's poor hatch and survival of late season quail. Results from the 1987 call-counts indicate a slight increase in quail statewide. With prospects for an unchanged level of success in the 1987 season, the best bets for bobwhites are for Tidewater, followed by northern Virginia, eastern Piedmont, western Piedmont and the western mountains.

Ruffed Grouse

According to Wildlife Biologist Supervisor Joe Coggin, hunting for ruffed grouse should be very good this fall. Last year's grouse wing survey indicated that Virginia grouse hunters flushed 1.40 birds per hour, the second highest flush rate recorded since the 1980 season. The percentage of juvenile birds in the harvest this past season was 40.5 percent, and is still well above the 10-year average of 33.7 percent. While grouse hunting is expected to be good west of the Blue Ridge, District Wildlife Biologist Hal Myers from Amherst reports that few grouse were heard drumming during this spring in the counties along the eastern slopes of the Blue Ridge, and feels that the grouse will remain unchanged for the eastern part of the state.

Squirrel

Old Dominion squirrel hunters harvested an estimated 1½ million bushytails during the 1986-87 season. A bumper mast crop in 1985 resulted in excellent squirrel hunting across the state this past season, but the 1986 acorn crop was considerably less. Squirrel hunters west of the Blue Ridge will generally find limits of bushytails harder to come by, but Piedmont and Tidewater hunters should enjoy another excellent season. Plus, Orange county will have an early squirrel season this year, from October 1-14.

Rabbit

Last year's rabbit harvest was better than expected and prospects appear good for this fall as well. Department biologists in Tidewater predict that rabbit hunters will find more animals this season, while field personnel from the Piedmont and Northern Virginia regions have reported good production this year, and western hunters should expect a season comparable to last year.

Woodcock

Eastern U.S. woodcock hunters enjoyed increased daily and seasonal success on woodcock last year, but Virginia hunters did not experience this trend. The poor overall success can be attributed in large part to summer drought and warm weather in the fall, which probably delayed migration. Woodcock numbers are still below the long-term average, but the split season adopted this year, November 2-26 and December 21-January 9, should allow hunters to make the best of local conditions and fall migration flights.

Best areas include the eastern Piedmont, Tidewater, and the Eastern Shore during the late season. Western grouse hunters should be alert for woodcock migrating through the Shenandoah Valley region during November.

Mourning Dove

The annual mourning dove harvest in Virginia is 900,000-1,000,000 birds. Almost 90 percent of the birds bagged, and about one-third of the total statewide dove season harvest occurs on opening day.

Jack Gwynn, Supervising Research Biologist from Charlottesville, reports that the number of doves heard on call routes increased 12 percent over last year, though the current dove population is well below the long-term average.

Chief of Game Jack Raybourne advises that the number of acres planted to corn this year is at a record low and harvest may be delayed by up to ten days. Still doves should be plentiful, and prospects are excellent.

Waterfowl

Fax Settle, Supervising Wildlife Biologist, advises that improved brood numbers over 1986 should result in a slight increase in the number of ducks in the fall flight. The Canada goose population in the Atlantic is better than last year and fall flight forecast calls for more birds. The numbers of greater snow geese also should be better than last year. However, Atlantic brant experienced lower than average production and their numbers will be substantially below normal. Eastern tundra swan numbers are expected to remain unchanged.

National Hunting & Fishing Day
September 26